

TREITSCHKE

AND THE GREAT WAR

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PREFACE

THE conduct of the German nation during the present war must be judged by the preliminary incidents and the brutality which marked the opening months of the war. In spite of a highly organised system of mendacity and misrepresentation, the truth has reached the ears of the civilised world, and some restraint has been imposed upon the German troops. We must, therefore, regard their conduct in the first months as the conduct they deliberately adopted. Their actions have been a sinister revelation to the nations of the world. There seems to have been an outpouring from the pit, and the problem for thoughtful people in every nation is how this

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morbid temper has got into the German nature.

Many people are misled by the word "culture," which has been associated with the German proceedings. What the Germans call *Kultur* is by no means the same thing as what English people call culture. It means civilisation. It means the whole system of social, political and commercial life; the schools, the parliamentary system, the industrial life, the technical skill, the military system, and everything which distinguishes the civilised man from the savage. The fact that various scholars of Germany seem to have approved the conduct of the war probably gives some colour to the general misunderstanding, yet how anyone could suppose that religious thinkers like Harnack and Eucken could approve the horrible outrages that have desecrated the soil of Belgium one cannot

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understand. The censorship in Germany is far more rigorous even than in England, and one may well suppose that these outrages are entirely unknown to the leading thinkers. Yet it is a fact that some of Germany's leading scholars have approved the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, and it is well known how German military policy prescribes the treatment of a conquered country if there be any resistance.

There is some taint in the blood or the brain of one of the greatest Powers of the modern world. It is, therefore, of interest to inquire whether there are any elements in German culture which indirectly might lead to or palliate such brutalities. Everybody now knows the sentiments of military writers like General von Bernhardi. With his name is associated, as the second apostle of the German modern gospel, the name

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of a distinguished historian, Heinrich von Treitschke.

To understand what is called "the soul of the German people," one of the most familiar phrases in German literature, the history of Germany must be borne in mind. The progress that has been made by the German people in the last one hundred years has few parallels in history. Prussia emerged from the Napoleonic war a small and deeply shattered State. Within the hundred years since the final victory at Waterloo, it has gathered province after province, and to-day it commands one of the most powerful and—we thought yesterday—most enlightened nations of the modern world. Germany is naturally proud of its great success. Nor must we suppose that this success has been purely military. How many times in recent years have not our magazines assured us

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of the superiority of German education, German commercial enterprise, German technical skill? The serious problem is not to explain the pride of the German people, but to understand how these achievements are squared with the horrible outrages which apparently find little restraint in higher quarters in Germany.

Treitschke was one of the most popular historians of modern Germany. Of a very poetic and romantic nature, he impressed the story of his country upon crowds of youths in the greatest German University with a fire and eloquence of which we find few examples amongst modern historians. Although a Czech by extraction, his nature responded ardently to the features of modern German history, and he became the most influential teacher in the country. Prussia was to him almost a sacred Power. The Reformation had

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inaugurated a new period in the life of Europe, and Prussia was its great interpreter. Beginning life as a Liberal, his sympathy with Bismarck and the Prussian Government converted him into a Conservative of the most obstinate character. He almost deified the ways and traditions of the Hohenzollerns.

In person also, Treitschke was eminently fitted to be the apostle of Bismarckism. As a young man, although a brilliant student, he was sent down from his university for duelling and constant disturbance. Accident prevented him from becoming a soldier, and he carried all the ardour of a soldier into the interpretation of history. Like Goethe he wavered long between poetry and action, and he ended by infusing poetic fire into a gospel of drastic action. No demand could be made by the State, however exacting, but Treitschke

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religiously impressed it on the youth of Germany. He was a politician in the widest sense of the word, as well as an historian. The whole of history, in his mind, encouraged the development of the German Empire along the line on which it had entered. He glorified war as few historians have ever done, and he laid down principles the action of which we can plainly detect in the most recent ambitions of Germany. How these principles were seized by military writers, how Treitschke's sometimes reluctant concessions to the hard traditions of Prussia were made to serve the purpose of the more corrupt elements in German life, is one of the most interesting studies in connection with the German character. To him we can trace a very large part of the abnormally swollen idea which young Germany has of its position and its future, and there are few points in the more repulsive

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military gospel which cannot find shelter in some of the pages of Treitschke.

He, more than any, infused into German students—the generation which is fighting against us to-day—a jealousy and disdain of England. He, more than any, gave a high-sounding moral and religious character to the military ambitions of Germany. He lived through the making of the German Empire, and, in impressing that story on the mind of a new generation, he created the ambition which has led undoubtedly to the present confusion in Europe. How his character developed these dangerous tendencies, and what were the doctrines which he expounded in the class-rooms of the Berlin University, or the Hall of the Reichstag, or the higher Press of his country, I propose to explain.

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CHAPTER I

THE IDEAS AND INFLUENCE OF TREITSCHKE

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CHAPTER I

THE IDEAS AND INFLUENCE OF TREITSCHKE

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHKE was born at Dresden on September 15th, 1834. His father was an officer, and eventually a General, of the Saxon army; a man related to the Saxon nobility, but, not very many generations back, tracing his descent from Czech ancestors. His admiring biographer, Hausrath, traces those features of his nature which made him such a power in Germany precisely to his foreign ancestry. Nietzsche, who is regarded by many as another great influence in the

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making of Germany, was a Pole. Treitschke, also, was by origin a Slav. But the whole environment of his early years gave a bent to his mind. His father had fought in the later years of the Napoleonic war; his mother was the daughter of an officer. In the natural course of things he would assuredly have become a soldier, but an accident in his early years gave a different turn to his career.

Talleyrand had his whole career perverted by an accident which lamed him when he was a child. In 1842 young Treitschke had smallpox, and it left him with a serious disorder of the ears, which in time turned into complete deafness. This closed the military world against him, and he threw his whole energy into learning. By the age of ten he knew Latin thoroughly and Greek very fairly. The military sentiment mingled with the books he read. He liked nothing better

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than to wrap himself in his father's military cloak and play the soldier. His great hero, shining beyond the heroes of Homer, was Blücher.

He was a strong, wild boy, with little affection for his mother and an ardent attachment to his father, whom he constantly accompanied to the camp. Letters written to his father in his fourteenth year show that he was deeply interested in politics even at that early age. His schoolmaster, moreover, was a vigorous Pan-German. Treitschke's readings about ancient Rome and Greece gave him a boyish leaning to republicanism, but he soon outgrew that bias and looked upon the revolutionary disturbances of 1848 with youthful disfavour; by his seventeenth year he was already an ardent believer in the union of Germany under Prussia.

At that time, in 1848, the German subjects

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of Denmark were rebelling in Schleswig and Holstein, and he followed the accounts in the papers with deep interest. He wrote a fiery poem on the "heroes" who fell in the rebellion. He called upon Germany to "wipe out the wild shame with the wild sword of the avenger," and the juvenile poem ended:

"Break, ye waves, break wildly on our advancing keel,
Yet we will sail still onward, and we will reach the
goal."

With these sentiments Treitschke went to Bonn University in the spring of 1851. He had already a keen eye for the division of Germany into little States, separated by tariff walls, as his letters to his father showed. In a vague, youthful way his idea of Germany had already dawned. At Bonn he applied himself chiefly to the study of history and of the *Politics* of Aristotle. Years afterwards he said to his students: "The man who

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would have a sound political sense must steel himself in the steel-bath of classical antiquity, which produced the greatest masterpiece of theoretical politics—the *Politics* of Aristotle.”

His deafness again influenced his career. For a time he strained his ears to follow the instruction of the professors, but he had little success, and he resigned himself to hard solitary reading and long solitary walks. For the ordinary frivolities of student life he had little taste. He was a stern, very religious young man; by no means anæmic. His broad shoulders, his penetrating dark eyes and black hair, revealed the great energy of his nature. His reading was exceedingly varied, and always turned upon the conception of a State. He read English lawyers like Blackstone, and his favourites ranged from Machiavelli to Shakespeare. His chief professor,

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Dahlmann, represented the Reformation as the starting point of a new civilisation, in which Prussia was to take the lead. This idea sank deep into the serious mind of young Treitschke. He wrote to his father, "The greatest thing of all is the fulfilment of duty," and he still followed the confused political development of Germany with remarkable intelligence for so young a man. In spite of his father belonging to one of the small German States, Treitschke was early convinced that they must be either persuaded or compelled to pass under the leadership of Prussia.

By this time he had intelligently grasped the history and the situation of Germany. The kingdom which Frederick the Great had so ably established had been ground under the heel of Napoleon. At the Council of Vienna, in 1815, the ambitions of the German statesmen were checked by Talleyrand and

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the English representatives, so that the Kingdom of Frederick was not wholly restored. The rest of Germany was linked with Prussia in a Confederation which proved itself an almost lifeless and helpless mass of petty States under the reactionary influence of Austria. This conflicted violently with the recent movement in German literature. Goethe and Schiller and Herder, and all the brilliant writers of the beginning of the 19th century, had called for a rebirth of the German spirit. For more than a hundred years Germany had shown signs of exhaustion. In letters it could do little more than imitate the French, but in the latter part of the 18th century a great German literature had arisen, and the strong patriotic sentiment which this literature inspired made young men deeply impatient of the actual helplessness of the country. Prussia seemed at first to Treitschke

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to share this helplessness. It had at first supported the claim of the Duke of Augustenburg to Schleswig and Holstein, and had retired under the pressure of England and Russia. The cry of "weakness" and national shame was raised throughout young Germany. This was renewed when, in 1852, the Treaty of London guaranteed the integrity of Denmark. During the same year a national parliament was at work in Germany trying to reorganise the Confederation. The country was split into two parties; some were for a big Germany, including Austria, others for the exclusion of Austria and the welding of all the small States into a Kingdom under the lead of Prussia. They even offered the title of Emperor to Frederick William IV., but that autocrat would receive no gift from the hand of a democratic parliament. Thus every attempt of Germany to assert its strength

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and its mighty resources ended in failure, and the Powers of Europe paid little heed to the demands of Germany in their counsels.

Treitschke's industrious reading and fiery thinking were accompanied by an acute interest in these domestic problems. In 1852 he went to study at Leipzig. Here again he found himself unable to follow the professors, and spent his days and nights in hard solitary reading. He was comprehensive in his taste. French novels mingled with the volumes of Hume and Adam Smith and Ricardo on his desk, but everything which he read went in his mind to the building up of a great idea of a State, and that State was to be Prussia. For the time being he despised Prussia, and his feelings, as reflected in his letters, were almost aimless and discontented. In 1854 he passed on to Tübingen, and then to Heidelberg University, where he continued to

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unite a deep study of economics and history with the writing of patriotic poems. In 1855 he was dismissed from Heidelberg University because of his constant challenges to dangerous duels with pistols.

A letter, written to his father in March, 1856, when he was studying at Goettingen, gives us a remarkable illustration of his development. He had, at an earlier date, studied Machiavelli, and it is clear that that unscrupulous theorist had made a lasting impression on his mind. He says to his father, referring to Machiavelli: "He was assuredly a practical statesman better fitted than any other, to destroy the illusion that the world can be reformed by cannon loaded only with *ideas* of right and truth. Even the politic of this much-decried apologist for crude force, seems to me adapted to the present condition of Prussia. It sacrifices right and

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virtue to a great idea—the might and unity of its people: which cannot be said of the party that at present controls Prussia. This fundamental idea of the work—the glowing patriotism, and the conviction that even the most oppressive despotism must be welcomed when it makes for the might and unity of the Fatherland—have reconciled me to many perverse and repulsive views of the great Florentine.”

It is almost humorous to find, that, when his father about the same date scolded him for his religious liberalism, he replied that he honoured Christianity above all religions in the world as “The Gospel of Love.”

Treitschke still hesitated between poetry and science. Year after year he polished the verses he had written in his 'teens, and at length, in 1856, he published them. The art is not impressive, but one finds running

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through the whole volume a feeling of burning shame for the lowliness of Germany in the concert of Europe, and a stern conviction that she must attain power and greatness by hard work and sacrifice. At the same time he wrote an article in the Prussian Year Book on "The Foundations of English Liberty," and we are told that it was attributed to Mommsen. In 1857 he returned to Leipzig and wrote his thesis on "The Science of Society." The whole work is a plea for the broader development of political economy, and the dream of German unity breaks in continually. It closed with the words of Shakespeare:

"There is a mystery, with whom relation
Dare not meddle, in the soul of State,
Which hath an operation more Divine
Than breath or pen can give expression to."

He began to teach in the year 1859. His

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subject was "The History of Political Theories," and it is significant that we find his father warning him that he is being watched. Although he was teaching in one of the small German States, Saxony, he freely expounded his ideal of a United Germany. The rumour of a secret alliance between France and Russia for the destruction of Germany, which was current at that time, greatly alarmed him and he turned again to Prussia. He said in one of his letters: "That Germany will win in the end I do not doubt for a moment: otherwise there is no God in Heaven." He saw enemies of Germany on every frontier. Russia he despised. England he regarded, in spite of his admiration of Milton and Shakespeare, as thwarting the development of Germany. Austria he described as "the hereditary enemy of German Unity." War seemed to him inevitable, and

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out of the crucible of war he believed a stronger and purified Germany would emerge. "Germany," he said, "will bleed again, as it did two hundred years ago, for the freedom of the whole world."

Both his letters and his lectures reflect the terrible passions of the year 1859 in Germany. His hearers in the University increased monthly in numbers, and he took up the subject of the history of Prussia, in spite of his father's warning. In a letter of February 10th, 1861, he says that he is going to write a "History of the German Confederation," which will convince all of the need to "destroy the small States." His correspondence with his father—a high official in the most reluctant of these small States—became more and more troubled, and he was compelled to leave Leipzig. "To change my conviction out of love of you I am unable,"

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he said to his father. He went to Munich and began to write his history of the Confederation. His letters constantly complain that there is no *power* in small States. "Germany," he says, "needs an Emperor to teach it freedom." He was still a Liberal in regard to internal politics, and in 1863 he wrote an appreciative article on "Lord Byron and Radicalism," and lectured on the History of England.

The sentiments which Treitschke openly expressed both in his university lectures and on many public occasions, brought increasing animosity upon him. In that year, 1863, there was a great meeting of 20,000 athletes at Leipzig, and Treitschke was invited to address them. The vast audience raised his patriotism to the whitest heat, and the innocent gathering was astounded to hear from the platform a glowing demand for the unity

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of Germany. The speech was afterwards printed, and had a large circulation in Saxony. The Saxon authorities, regarding with great distrust the plea of unity, and leaning towards Austria as some protection against what they described as the ambition of Prussia, watched Treitschke with anxiety. The agitation became worse when, in the same year 1863, the trouble about Schleswig and Holstein was renewed. Frederick VII. of Denmark had died, and the Prince of Augustenburg had renewed his claim to the Duchies. The Nationalist party in Germany warmly supported him, and Treitschke's eloquence was enlisted on his behalf; indeed, modest as his salary was, and little as he could expect from his father in such a cause, he made a large contribution to the military funds of the Duke's campaign. At that time he still regarded Prussia with great distrust, but before many

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months he was entirely converted to the Prussian cause.

Bismarck had taken power in 1862. Treitschke had been calling for "a heart glowing with great passion, a brain cold and clear." That was his ideal of the man that the German genius was to produce, as it had produced men like Luther and Frederick at every crisis in the national life. He was, however, repelled by Bismarck's internal policy. He was still a Liberal, and Bismarck's blood-and-iron was at that time directed solely against the subjects of Prussia. It was the turning point in Treitschke's transition from his early democracy to the drastic autocracy of his later years. When, in 1864, Austria and Prussia united for the purpose of ending the trouble in Denmark—which they did in the thoroughly German manner of crushing Denmark and appropriating its provinces—

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Treitschke began to look with more favour on the great Prussian statesman. Still they hesitated to incorporate Schleswig and Holstein into German territory, and Treitschke's admiration also hesitated. The arrangement was that Austria should administer Holstein, and Prussia should administer Schleswig. By this time the Duke of Augustenburg had become for Treitschke "a miserable pretender," and he saw in the co-operation of Austria and Prussia the beginning of "a real State."

Leipzig had become so warm for him that he had in 1864 removed to Freiburg. Here he continued to work at his history of the German Confederation, and his lectures especially dealt with States which had won independence by the sword. He dealt with the Netherlands and the rebellion against Austria. He depicted in glowing terms the revolt of the American colonies against

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England. Every page of history was made to serve the purpose of his great Pan-German ideal. One State alone could bring about this unity of Germany, and he perceived more and more clearly that that State was Prussia.

His letters clearly illustrate the strange growth of his mind at that time. He was prepared to sacrifice everything to his ideal of the State. His early Roman reading still lingered in his mind, and to the end of his life "freedom" remained one of the most familiar terms on his lips. Now, however, he begins to say in his letters: "The democratic battle-cry—first freedom, then unity—is nonsense: it means first State-rights, then a State." In another letter of the same year he says: "The might of the greatest German State must compel the power of the smaller Courts to submit to a national central Government." He began to realise that over the whole period

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of German history, which he was studying, Prussia had been making steadily for supremacy. It must have been shortly after this period that he wrote the following passage in his *History of Germany* :

“ More than once before had Prussia amazed the German world by the sudden outburst of its latent moral energies. So it was when Prince Frederick William thrust his little State into the rank of the Great Powers : so it was when King Frederick entered upon the struggle for Silesia. But not one of these marvels of Prussian history so thoroughly astonished the Germans, as the rapid and glorious rise of the half-shattered power, after its terrible fall at Jena. While the honoured names of the past were disdainfully reckoned among the dead, and even in Prussia everybody deplored that there was no strong young generation to take the place of the elders, a

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new race gathered round the throne : powerful characters, inspired hearts, clear heads without number, a vast crowd of legal and military talents keeping pace with the literary greatness of the nation. Just as Frederick had, on the battle fields of Bohemia, only reaped what his father had sown in time of peace, so this rapid recovery of the depressed monarchy was the ripe fruit of years of hard work. The State pulled itself together and assimilated to itself all that German poets and thinkers had said, during the preceding decades, about the dignity and liberty of man and the moral purposes of life. It trusted the liberating power of the spirit : it let the full stream of the ideas of the new Germany flow over it. Now at last Prussia was the German State—the best and ablest branch of the Fatherland—and the Germans, down to the last man, rushed to the black and white standard. The soaring

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idealism of a higher culture held out new duties and new aims to the old Prussian bravery and loyalty, and nerved the heart for self-sacrificing deeds for the advance of political life."

This language appears plainly in Treitschke's letters by the year 1864. He talks with the greatest bitterness about the Southern States. "I belong," he says, "to the North with all my soul." He begins to see the purpose of Bismarck. Bismarck is going to "secure for us our proper place on the North and the East coasts." The Saxons, who regarded the Prussians as still half-barbaric and were more friendly even to France, were greatly exasperated by this language. Treitschke returned their contempt. A little country, in his growing philosophy, could not be a State; it could not have the *power* which he now firmly held to be the essence of a State.

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His visited Switzerland. He found the poor much more comfortable than in any of the great States of Europe. He found the brotherhood and freedom which were then beyond any other country in Europe. Yet he wrote with great disdain of Switzerland and its democracy. There was nothing "great" about it; it had no art, no science, no statecraft. Mediocrity seemed to be the plainest outcome of the institutions of a small democracy. He visited Paris also, and he reported that the only thing the German need envy in Paris was the Louvre. Everything else in Paris was equalled or surpassed in one or other town of Germany. His Prussian religion was growing rapidly. In the next year it would reach its full growth.

Since 1864 the arrangement between Austria and Prussia had given rise to constant friction. Ardent Unionists like Treitschke

were not entirely displeased with the friction. It would give Prussia the occasion that it required for annexing the Duchies, and Treitschke now began to speak openly of taking that step. "We must," he said, early in 1865, "take a revolutionary step, in the good sense of the word; we must cease to talk about law and right." His moral philosophy was rapidly accommodating itself to his German ideal. When, in 1866, the friction ended in war with Austria, Treitschke was one of the most ardent in approving the action of Bismarck. To the cries of the South German Press and the pitiful entreaties of his father, he replied: "The first duty of a good patriot is to make still greater the power of Prussia." People in Berlin kept an eye on this useful recruit in the Southern provinces. Treitschke was invited to begin his long connection with the Prussian Year Book. He asked the permission of Bismarck

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to make research in the Archives of Berlin. Replying that there was nothing in the Prussian Archives to conceal from the public or from the historian, Bismarck, in a very gracious letter, gave him permission, and he went to Berlin at the beginning of 1866.

Unlike Goethe, he was deeply impressed by the power and culture of Berlin. No other German town at that time could compare in growth with the capital of Prussia, and Treitschke's ardour considerably increased. While he was in Berlin the war with Austria grew nearer. Saxony was mobilising on the side of Austria, and a bitter correspondence took place between Treitschke and his father. The young man pleaded that for him politics was only part of a larger ethic, and patriotism a moral duty. His language is affectionate and most considerate, but he was a preacher

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of self-sacrifice and never for a moment hesitated to practice what he preached.

As he drew away from his father he was attracted more and more to Bismarck. The Prussian Chancellor and Treitschke seemed to be in a singular position towards each other. Bismarck saw the immense value of this dithyrambic historian of Prussia. He was, however, quite aware that Treitschke still clung to his Liberal ideas, and he tried to bring about some form of compromise. He held out to Treitschke the prospect of occupying the chair of history at Berlin after the war, and in the meantime of using his great journalistic power to influence public opinion in favour of Prussia. Treitschke replied candidly that he would not be a servant of Prussia until fully constitutional forms had been restored in the Kingdom. He therefore finished his work in the Archives of Berlin

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and returned to Freiburg. He was under the impression that Baden would remain neutral during the impending war, and that he could, therefore, plead the cause of Prussia from his platform at Freiburg. He soon found that his house was watched by the police, and that it was likely to be attacked by the mob. On June 17th Baden decided to throw in its lot with Austria against Prussia, and Treitschke fled from Freiburg to Berlin. He had now completely severed his connection with the Southern States; and in the person of this Slav-Saxon, Prussia had obtained one of its most powerful and eloquent supporters.

From the moment he began literary work in Berlin his Radicalism was modified. The Liberals fought shy of Bismarck, as Treitschke himself had done in the earlier years. Treitschke rebuked them for their "obstinacy," and insisted that the question of liberty and

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reform must be placed on one side until the unity of Germany had been obtained. His mild criticisms of Bismarck's opinions now ceased entirely, and he turned with greater bitterness than ever to the attack on Saxony and Hanover. He belongs, he says, "to a glorious nation," and he will see it unified before he dies. His father was now almost entirely estranged from him, but the father's death in 1867 ended this painful feature of his career.

As he was still unable to accept service in the Prussian State, he went in October to Kiel, and began to lecture on history and politics in the University. After a few months he was transferred to Heidelberg, where he continued to mix history, politics and economics, in the new science which he believed he was founding. Most of his colleagues in the University looked with disdain on his new

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science, and regarded him merely as a journalist or pamphleteer. His deafness, which now became total, more or less kept him out of social life, so that he was tolerably indifferent to the opinion of the other professors. The students, on the other hand, crowded round his chair, and his influence over German young men of the middle class grew rapidly. He was now on terms of great friendship with Bismarck, and was working out the singular theory of State power and individual liberty which appeared in his later works. Bismarck had, in 1867, formed the North German Federation, of which he became Chancellor. The most important result of this was that the Prussian system of compulsory military service was imposed upon all the North German States, and a formidable army was put at the disposal of Prussia. Treitschke's Liberalism had so far waned that he welcomed

this extension of military power. Almost the only point he criticised in the new Federation was that, by special treaties, certain privileges were reserved for Bavaria, Baden, and Württemberg.

The next step in German history was now fairly clear in the minds of men like Treitschke and Bismarck. Expansion westward was considered to be absolutely necessary for the growth of German power, and events swiftly moved onward towards the Franco-German war. Treitschke's patriotism again rose to white heat when the prospect of a war with France was made clear. When war was actually declared, he broke into the most fiery rejoicing. His students were called away for military service, and one of them has described the ardent speech with which he bade them farewell. Fichte had sent out his students in the War of Liberation with the

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words "Conquer or die." Treitschke said to his students, in recalling those words, "Conquer at any price." There was a scene of wild excitement and Treitschke was regarded as a kind of hero by the students.

During the early months of the war he was singularly silent and retired. He had no doubt about the issue of the war. He was, in fact, preparing the terms which should be imposed upon France when she was conquered. In several weeks of remarkable research he traced the whole history of Alsace and Lorraine, and proved, as he believed, that they were really German, and must be taken from France at the close of the war. As he said at a later date, France had stolen the provinces from Germany, and it was an act of the highest morality to restore their nationality to the despoiled provincials. It is in keeping with his character that, when the victory was

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announced, he resented the current talk about a contrast between German virtue and French vice, yet in his later history he speaks of the result of the war as a punishment of the sins of France. The formation of the German Empire was the first result of the war, and the realisation of Treitschke's dreams of the last ten years. With Gustav Freitag he agreed that the title "Emperor" was showy and melodramatic. He preferred the more businesslike title of "King," but he yielded again to the policy of Bismarck, and criticised only the fact that once more certain of their ancient privileges had been left to some of the South German States.

In 1871 Treitschke became a member of the new Reichstag. His deafness made him a singular member of Parliament, but he was determined to watch with the closest interest the development of the new Empire. He had

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learned the lip language, but as a rule in the Reichstag he sat by the reporters and read their shorthand accounts of the speeches. In debates he could hardly take part, but his speeches on important issues made a profound impression on the House. He avoided rhetoric and sentimentality, even of the patriotic kind. His strong and clear convictions were expressed in language of great vigour, with occasional passages of biting wit and fierce reproof of all that stood in the way of Bismarck. "The star of our unity is rising: woe to the man who stands against it," he said occasionally in the House. He was one of the most urgent in demanding that the new provinces should be Germanised as speedily as possible, and in calling for the maintenance and further improvement of the victorious army. A short passage from one of his speeches delivered about that time will illustrate his Parliamentary method:

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“There is in the world to-day, gentlemen, a dark suspicion that the German Empire, like the Prussian State of yesterday, must have its European War, its Seven Years’ War. It seems to be written in the stars that the House of the Hohenzollerns can win no great success without incalculable sacrifices. God grant, gentlemen—we all wish it—that the foreboding is false. Whether it is false or not lies in the hands of fate. What lies in our hands is the task of keeping bright and sharp the weapons which have won Germany’s new glory. As far as the eye of man can see the resolute armament of Germany is the only means of preserving the peace of the world to-day.” He continued to sit in the Reichstag until 1888. By that time the appearance of new Parties, and especially of the Social Democratic Party, filled him with something like loathing of the Parlia-

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mentary system, and he retired from his seat.

Meantime he had continued to teach at Heidelberg. He was by this time one of the most popular professors in Germany. He refused to allow women to attend his lectures, and became more conservative every year. The great prosperity of Germany, however, which followed the successful war, filled him with joy, and even in social life he began to relax. About this time the German thinker, Hartmann, revived the philosophy of Schopenhauer. It seems probable that this philosophy, which makes will the central reality of the universe, had greatly influenced Treitschke's early ideas. For him, the assertion of will was the first duty of the State, hence his great usefulness to so astute a statesman as Bismarck. But the pessimism which was connected with the philosophy now filled

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Treitschke with disgust. A thinker, he said, who would put forward such a system in such glorious days as these must be suffering from spinal disease. At the same time Nietzsche began to put his weird speculations before the German public. His doctrine of power, of self-assertion, of reforming the moral code, agreed with some of Treitschke's ideas, and, although puzzled by many of its features, he welcomed the philosophy of Nietzsche. Science, it seemed to him, was joining with history in approving the ideal of German power at which he had arrived.

In 1874 Treitschke at last accepted the invitation to teach at the Berlin University, and from that time onward there was little left of his Liberalism. Bismarck entered upon the famous Kulturkampf. Treitschke dutifully described it as "the struggle of freedom against fanaticism." Every measure that

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Bismarck brought forward had his support, although the Liberals and Radicals were growing more and more indignant with the Chancellor. When at length Bismarck found it expedient to retire from the Kulturkampf, it was mainly Treitschke who covered his retreat. That episode of German political history has never been fully clear, and many Liberals have failed to understand the action of Treitschke. The truth seems to be that Bismarck abandoned the struggle against the Catholics because a new and more formidable enemy had appeared on the horizon of the German political world. This enemy was Socialism, and, like Bismarck, Treitschke dreaded it above all other sects or parties. He now moved entirely in Conservative circles; his friends were mainly members of the aristocracy or of military or clerical rank. Amongst the students he still retained all his

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popularity, and he used his influence to attack every Liberal and Humanitarian movement which arose. "Life," he said, "is too hard for philanthropic phrases"; he would be no "preacher in politics." We shall see later how all these advanced ideas, which have been embodied in the legislation of modern times, conflicted with his utterly false ideal of the State. The authorities, however, applauded and encouraged in every way his influence on the young men of Germany. His lectures were said to be a "steel-bath" for students. So good was his position that, when the great historian Ranke died in 1886, Treitschke was chosen to succeed him as "The Historian of the State of Prussia." When, two years later, the Emperor died, Treitschke was invited to deliver a memorial address. The closing paragraph may be quoted here in illustration of the gospel that he was then preaching in Germany :

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“Life is to the living. The nation turns its eyes in hopeful confidence towards its young Imperial master. Every word he has yet addressed to his people breathes power and courage, piety and justice. We now know that the fine spirit of William’s days is not lost to the Empire, and even in these days of grief we have lived through a great hour of German history. Our princes gathered with German fidelity around their Emperor, and with him met the representatives of the nation. The world learns that the German Emperor never dies, whoever may bear the crown. What a change since the time when the courts anxiously awaited, each New Year’s Day, the orders of the mysterious Cæsar for his subjects! To-day the German speech from the throne does not devote a single word to those western powers which once had the idea of controlling the world without our assist-

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ance ; it is useless to reckon with enemies who cannot be taught or with doubtful friends. Whether Europe reconciles itself peacefully to the ending of the old situation, or whether the German sword must leap once more from the scabbard to protect what it has won, we are ready ; we are armed for either alternative. Unless all the signs of the times deceive us, this great century, which in its earliest days was French, will end as a German century. Germany's intellect and Germany's deeds have solved the problem of combining a great traditional power of the State, with the just demands of a new social order. A day must come when the nations will realise that the battles of Emperor William did not merely create a Fatherland for Germany, but gave a more just and more rational order to the whole civilised world. Then we shall see the fulfilment of the words of the venerable poet,

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Emanuel Geibel: 'One day the whole world may recover its health in the German character.'''

This was the Gospel which Treitschke was propagating amongst the young men of Germany, and one can read between the lines of it, if not in the lines themselves, the very terms of that ideal which has infatuated Germany in our day. This was the advice which the aged historian offered to the new Emperor. It was only too faithfully accepted. Bismarck was dismissed, but the worst elements of the Bismarckian policy were retained. Treitschke fully approved of the immense and burdensome task which the military authorities imposed on Germany. Once more I may take a passage from one of his speeches.

In 1895, the year before he died, he addressed the students of the University of Berlin. The speech, which has been pub-

lished, is called "In Memory of the Great War." He describes the long years of powerlessness under the shadow of Austria, the disaster under Napoleon, the "lamentable Confederation" which followed Waterloo. During all those years, he said, "we were the laughing-stock of foreigners." We had only one "loyal friend," Thomas Carlyle of England, the only non-German writer who saw "the nobility of the German soul." In England generally the very word "Fatherland" was a thing of mockery and contempt, and no one in Europe expected any good to come of Germany. Germany itself was split into parties, or afflicted with "all the infantile diseases of politics." He went on: "As un-failing as the hammer of Thor, the sword of Germany had to strike: the changing fortune of war had to be made unchangeable, and wreath after wreath must be added to our

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colours in order that this most libelled and most hated of all nations should regain its place among the powers of the world." Then Prussia "entered on the old path of victory." Still the position of Germany was not recognised, and the contempt of Europe was intolerable. "We needed a complete, indisputable, wholly German victory to compel our neighbours to respect us." King William, the "hero," gave the call, and "a free, strong, proud nation" responded.

Treitschke then gave his hearers an idyllic description of the way in which the power of the German will overbore the French in 1870, and even mothers and sisters "remembered in their grief that they had added one leaf to the growing wreaths of German glory." The Emperor "realised that Providence had chosen him and his army for carrying out its designs." Treitschke glorifies the generals,

the Chancellor, the German princes, and all the other heroes of the war. He tells the young men how Germany insisted on having an Empire at the close of the war, and how the founding of the Empire led to the amazing prosperity of Germany. Not all their hopes were realised, however. They had thought that France would, "after two decades," co-operate amiably with Germany for the advance of civilisation, and France was still dreaming of revenge. Other nations were jealous of Germany's prosperity and hampered her development beyond the seas. Moreover, "the sub-German peoples of the region of the Danube illustrate the historical law of ingratitude to the Germans, who gave them their civilisation." At home the artisans are disputing "the dominance of talent," and losing "all reverence for God, and all respect for the barriers which the nature of the sexes and the

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structure of society have set to human desires.”

The worst feature of all is that men are losing their “reverence for the Fatherland.” They are regarding their country as a social community which will enable them to earn more money and spend it in security on pleasure. This general spread of education is ruining the nation, and Bismarck himself had been very bitter and pessimistic in his last years. Still, Treitschke rejoices to think that “the idea of the Empire glows in every heart,” and he concludes: “Germany has, during a quarter of a century of the most dangerous diplomatic friction, given peace to the world; not by the means advocated by pacifists, that is, disarmament, but by precisely the opposite means, armament. Germany’s example turned the armies of Europe into nations, and the nations into armies, and thus made war a terrible venture; and, as no Frenchman has

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said that France can win back by arms its ancient ill-gotten provinces, perhaps we may expect further years of peace. Meantime our western frontier slowly but surely spreads towards that of our ancient Fatherland, and the time will come when German civilisation, which has so often changed its seat, will again reign supreme in its own home."

He calls upon the young men to listen for the summons to the colours; to be ready for either peace or war. And his last words have a sinister application to the hideous trouble that is confronting us in Europe to-day: "God bless our Emperor and King, God give him a wise, just, and firm Government, and give us the power to sustain and *enlarge* the proud legacy of those glorious days."

There, less than twenty years ago, only some months before his death, we have the

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complete doctrine which Treitschke put into the veins of the present generation in Germany. To his last hour the State was to him the stern bearer of the sword. Far from being content with that massive prosperity of which he had written the history, he still called upon the young soldiers of Germany to extend their frontiers at the cost of other people's. There can be no question but that this teaching, given with all the weight of the chief chair of history in Germany, written eloquently in a dozen popular works, and thundered occasionally from great popular platforms, was one of the chief elements in the making of the Germany which we confront to-day. Treitschke died at Berlin on April 28th, 1896. His teaching lives in the pernicious book of his pupil Bernhardi, in the Manuals of Instruction of the German officers, and in the hallucinations of the German Press. That teaching we may

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now examine more closely, in so far as it is responsible for the swollen ambition and lamentable methods of the modern German army.

CHAPTER II

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THE chief feeling of the German people, which one would not at first be disposed to connect with their scholars, is the inflated idea of the position and mission of their country. Nothing is perhaps more repellent in the German Press of the present day than the claim that God is watching with especial favour their unscrupulous enterprise and the brutal method by which it is conducted. We read constantly of their assurance that conquering another country is only a painful necessity in the discharge of their mission to raise it to a higher civilisation. Undoubtedly many Germans have a sincere conviction in this respect. The

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most eccentric utterances of the Kaiser will be found anticipated to some extent in utterances of some of the learned professors of the German universities, and it is perhaps one of the most startling results of the study of Treitschke's works that he fully encourages the stupid and mediæval idea that God is, through the Emperor, directing the army and the German people. The most inflated idea that any German daily is at present impressing on the minds of its readers seems at times to be little more than a repetition of the passages in which Treitschke exalts Germany, and especially Prussia, above all the nations of the earth.

The doctrine of Treitschke is a singular mixture of his own temperament, the influence of contemporary events, and his professional reading of history. A man of great physical vigour, he made an ideal of vigour, as such men are apt to do. "Greatness" was the

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feature which above all others he sought in a State. Hence he came to the singular view that "power" is the essence of the State. This view was fully confirmed by the history of Germany through which he lived. He knew from his reading the condition of Germany in the time of Goethe. The whole of the early German literature bears witness to the sterility and powerlessness of the country. It was not one great nation, but a great race shattered into a hundred small States, and apparently laid powerless by this dispersion. Treitschke then saw the contrast between the power and prosperity of a united Germany and the helplessness of the hundred small States of the earlier days. It was not unnatural, and not entirely wrong for him to suppose that the concentration of power had brought about the wonderful success of his country. He saw further that the one great

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instrument in the restoration of German power was the Prussian army. Again he concluded that power, and chiefly military power, was the first aim or institution of a great State.

His study of history, which ranged from ancient Rome and Greece to the latest developments of Europe, easily confirmed him in this theory. In his chief work, where he expounds with great learning and ingenuity his theory of a State, there is one remarkable defect. He begins by insisting that the essence of a State is power. He nowhere proves that this is a legitimate and essential character of a State. We will examine later how he supposes that the State can be something greater than the people who compose it, and therefore justified at times in imposing authority against their will. For the moment it is enough to observe that his conclusion was drawn in a somewhat superficial way from the pages of

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history. The nations that stand out in the pages of history, the nations that we are accustomed to call great, are the large and powerful military nations.

Treitschke did not overlook such States as Athens and Florence and their great artistic work. Here he is somewhat feeble in his reasoning. He knew well that they had no great military power, and he weakly ascribes their success to their constant intercourse with more powerful nations. He overlooks the fact that the philosophy of Greece and the art of Florence immensely surpass those of the more powerful nations with which they were in contact. He also overlooks the fact that in modern times, when every nation is richly connected with each other, the stimulus which he supposes in the case of Athens and Florence may be enjoyed by any small State in the world.

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Treitschke, however, read history mainly for the purpose of supporting his idea of the State. We find him repeatedly scoffing at small nations. Curiously enough, he bases his remarks upon Aristotle, who belonged to a State which from the German point of view was most emphatically so small as to be unworthy of recognition. From this he goes on to examine the supposed decay of Holland and Spain, and other nations when they cease to be great military powers. A passage from his chief work, *Politik*, gives his full argument :

“ A State must have a certain size. A ship which is only a foot long is, as Aristotle rightly says, not a ship, because you cannot sail in it. A State must, in addition, have sufficient material power to defend by arms the independence which is granted to it on paper. A political community which is not able to assert itself among its neighbours will always

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be in danger of losing its character as a State. That has always been the case ; great changes in the military arrangements have destroyed a large number of States. Since in our time an army of 20,000 men cannot be regarded as more than one weak army corps, the small States of central Europe cannot possibly last. There are, it is true, States which are not defended by their own forces but by the condition of equilibrium. That is clearly the case with Switzerland, Belgium and Holland ; they are protected by the international balance of power. This is a very firm foundation, and Switzerland may count on a very long lease of life provided that there is no material change in the present group of European States.” (It should be noticed that Treitschke says nothing about Belgium and Holland. The omission, when we connect it with other passages relating to Belgium and Holland,

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which will be quoted later, shows clearly that Treitschke himself fully approved the design of Germany some day to acquire Belgium and Holland.)

“Applying the test of self-government, we find the larger States of Europe rising to greater and greater power. The whole development of our States tends very clearly to the extermination of all the States which are of only secondary rank. If we take the non-European world into consideration there is a very serious prospect for us (Germans). Germany has always come off very badly in the distribution of territory beyond the seas amongst the European Powers, yet it is a matter of life and death to us as a great State to obtain territory beyond the seas. Otherwise we are faced with the terrible prospect of England and Russia dividing the world between them; and one wonders which would be the worse

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evil, the Russian knout or the English purse.

“ Looking more closely into the matter, we see clearly that if the State is power, only the really powerful States can be described as such. Hence the obvious absurdity which we find in the character of a small State. Weakness is not in itself ridiculous ; it is only the weakness which would pass itself off as strength. In small States you get the vulgar disposition to estimate a State according to the amount of taxes it levies ; the frame of mind which cannot see that the State, like the shell of an egg, cannot protect without exerting some pressure, and that the moral goods we owe to the State are priceless. In giving birth to this materialism the small State has a very mischievous influence on its citizens.

“ The small State is totally devoid of the

large States' power to be just. If you have cousins enough in a small State, and are not quite an idiot, you are provided for . . . Moreover the economic superiority of large States is obvious. In such ample proportions one has a greater feeling of security. . . . It is only in great States that there is developed the genuine national pride which is the symptom of a nation's moral robustness: the sentiments of the citizens are freer and larger in large institutions . . . no great nation can last long unless it has a great metropolis of culture. Culture in the broadest sense of the word always flourishes better in the ample circumstances of great States, than within the narrow limits of small States . . . Taking history as a whole, we see that all the masterpieces of poetry and art were produced on the soil of great nationalities. Proud Florence and Venice had so wide a commerce

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that there could be no question in their case of the Philistinism of the small State. There was an ideal pride, which recalls ancient Athens, in all their citizens. When did a masterpiece ever arise among a small people ? ” (pp. 43-48).

The defects of this historical argument need hardly be pointed out. Neither Athens nor Florence had the great commerce which he ascribes to them, and, even if they had, we have to reckon with the fact that they so far surpassed the larger powers with which they had intercourse. Take the case of the medieval Italian Republics, in which art flourished so luxuriantly. It is true that they had constant intercourse with the German Roman Empire, and with France. Yet they learned nothing from either, and became, in fact, the teachers of each. But we need not linger over the sophistry of Treitschke's argument.

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It is enough to show how one of the chief professors of history in Germany twists his learning into the service of the national ideal, and helps to build up the megalomania of the modern Empire.

More interesting, and perhaps more startling is Treitschke's contribution to the religious side of this megalomania. He was by no means an orthodox Christian. His letters to his father in earlier years very frequently turn upon his father's sorrow at his abandonment of the Protestant faith. This, however, was part of his early Radicalism. Although he probably never altered his conviction, he began in later years, as a matter of policy, to make a strong profession of supporting the Lutheran Church. Like Carlyle, of whom he speaks with such admiration, he made the mistake of taking the masses as they are and supposing that their character could not be altered. He

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noticed that their heroes were always either military or religious heroes. In order, therefore, to confirm them in sentiments which could be so much utilised by the Prussian Government, he took up an old theory of his professor, Dahlmann, and, in working out this theory, he spread sentiments which are largely responsible for what we call the more blasphemous elements of the German megalomania. He says in his *Politik* :

“The idea of a world-Empire is hateful : the idea of a State of Humanity is no ideal at all. The whole content of civilisation could not develop in a single State ; in no single people could the virtues of aristocracy and of democracy be united. All peoples are, like individual men, one-sided, and the richness of the human race consists in the totality of their partial natures. The rays of divine light are infinitely reflected in individual peoples ;

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each presents a different aspect and a distinct thought of the Deity. *Hence any single people has the right to believe that certain forces of the divine reason are most beautifully embodied in itself.* Without exaggeration a people cannot attain self-consciousness. The Germans are always in danger of losing their nationality because they have too little of this massive pride. The average German has very little political pride; but even our Philistines boast a social pride in the freedom and universality of the German spirit: and that is a good thing, for such a feeling is necessary if a people is to maintain and to assert itself."

This was the language which Treitschke used to the students of history in the University of Berlin. When he addressed the people he used an even stranger language. We have a speech which he made at Darmstadt, in

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1883, on "Luther and the German Nation." In this he reviews the "Glorious history of Germany" from the earliest dawn. He finds that the Germans were the first barbaric people of western Europe to see the beauty of Christianity, and that from their earliest conversion they always frowned on the corruption of Rome. They alone had the courage to rebel. Our historian contrives to overlook the Albigensians and other heretics who preceded the Reformation, and his analysis of the Reformation itself is superficial in the last degree. He is determined to place the whole merit of the Reformation in the character of Germany, and completely disregards the circumstances which made Germany so favourable a soil for the sentiment which was spreading throughout Europe. He says: "Only a man who had in his veins the boundless power of the German spirit could

venture upon so mighty an achievement.” Italy had its Petrarch and its Machiavelli—he makes no mention of Dante—but “the Latin peoples had not the strength to take their own ideas seriously: they succeeded in halving their consciences and obeying the Church which they despised. The Germans dared to shape their lives by the truth which they perceived; and, since the historical world is a world of will, since it is not ideas but will that controls the destinies of peoples, modern history does not begin with Petrarch nor with the artists of the Renaissance, but with Martin Luther.” Treitschke cannot lose the opportunity to connect his Prussian idea of the State with the Protestant religion. Luther, he said, brought about a political revolution in the fact that he destroyed the old maxim that spiritual power is superior to secular, and he thus prepared the way for

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the recognition of the sovereignty of the State. This was, he says, an immortal blessing for Germany. "Only in the cup of Protestantism could the ailing nation find its rejuvenating draught." It occurs to him that when the most oppressed part of the nation, the peasants, deduced from the principles of the Gospel that they were entitled to a larger share of the world's goods, Luther was one of the first to crush them. This was, Treitschke says, because the peasants took his Gospel "in a fleshly sense," and because Luther "shared with his people their reverent awe of the Imperial Majesty and of the noble young blood of Austria."

Treitschke proves, in this address to the Protestants of Germany, that even the new science and the new literature of Germany in modern times were due to the Reformation. He does not mention names, but he implies that

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such men as Goethe and Schiller were, as he says, "thoroughly Protestant." "It was only from the autonomy of conscience which Luther gave us that the new ideal of humanity could spring." Luther's greatness and the varied nature of his powers cannot be understood by foreigners, according to Treitschke. The Germans, however, quite understand him, because "he is blood of our blood." "From the sunken eyes of this robust son of a German peasant blazed the heroic old spirit of the Teutons, which does not flee the world but seeks to govern it by the might of its moral will."

The closing part of the speech unites the theory of the Reformation with the political ambition of Prussia in a remarkable manner, and shows us how Germans get the conviction that they are only carrying out a divine purpose in trampling on the lands of their

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neighbours. "In so rich an age as ours no good Protestant should lose the hope of even better days to come, since our whole people sees in Martin Luther its hero and teacher. We all know that at one time even a half-success of the Reformation was of great advantage to our country." He hints that the complete success of the Reformation, which the world needs, will only be accomplished by the entire expansion of Germany. In the Middle Ages, he says, a Schism was good for Europe; now the whole German nation must be Protestant. That holds out an uncomfortable prospect for the Catholics of Posen or of the Rhine Valley, and for the Jews and other non-Protestants. There must, according to Treitschke, be in Germany one great Church which "recognises the evangelical freedom of the Christian and the independence of the loyal and penitent conscience, and

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grants their just rights to the moral powers of this world, especially the State." One must remember that these words, which, in pamphlet form were scattered over Germany, came with the authority of the leading historian of the country. It is hardly surprising that less learned Germans have succeeded in convincing themselves that through the Prussian Army God is working out His purpose in the world.

This language, however, was hardly suitable for the class-room, and Treitschke turned to other arguments which would scientifically convince his pupils of the unique position of Germany. Germany, as is well known, and especially Berlin, is falling away from the old Lutheran religion. More secular considerations had to be invented for the unbelievers. These arguments Treitschke finds in the history, the geographical position and the

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culture of Germany. I have already explained that the word "culture" as used by the German means something very different from what we mean in English. The truth is, that even Treitschke had very little regard for culture as such. The State, he said repeatedly, "is not an academy of arts and sciences." He has a great disdain for most of the really great scholars of Germany. We must recognise, and until yesterday we did recognise, that German culture is one of the finest cultures in modern civilisation. Since the rise of Prussia, Germany has not only contributed more original philosophy to the world than any other three countries of modern times, but in every branch of science she has sustained her high position. It is a truism also, that she has attained great efficiency in education, industry and commerce, and some of the German experiments

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in social improvement have been adopted as models in other countries. It is well for us to recognise this solid nucleus of German pride, but the truth is that for men like Treitschke even these things are of secondary consideration. It is the organisation of Germany as a power-State, in other words, it is Prussianism, that he regards as the chief distinction of his country. He repeatedly boasts that Germany is the most perfect monarchy under the sun, and we shall see in the next chapter how, in his official lectures, he praises the German constitution and bitterly disdains the English constitution, which even German reformers were disposed to admire. This misunderstanding of German culture has made the German mind almost unintelligible to many people to-day.

The confusion is perhaps all the more natural when we find Treitschke speaking constantly

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of the "idealism" of Germany and the "materialism" of England and other countries. Once more, however, he takes idealism in a peculiar sense. In a lecture on "Fichte and the National Idea" he says: "It will last, this much-desired idealism of the Germans. A grander future will open for this idealist people when a righter philosophy unites in one great system of thought, the results of our political activity and the immense wealth of our empirical knowledge. We who live can best sustain the spirit of Fichte if all the nobler of us work for the growth and ripening in our fellow citizens of 'the character of the warrior' which knows how to make sacrifices for the State. When Fichte's name is mentioned, people think at once of the orator who cried out to an oppressed people those heroic words: 'To have character and to be

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German are beyond question the same thing.' ”

One needs very little knowledge of German history to recognise that this is sheer abuse of the doctrine of Fichte. Against the despotism which Treitschke was supporting in Germany, Fichte would have protested with all his soul. It was in the war against the despotism which Napoleon tried to fasten on his country that Fichte summoned his students to cultivate the spirit of the warrior, but Treitschke, as an historian, twists every fact and every authority to suit his purpose. Idealism in his mind is above all things the military spirit and a readiness to sacrifice one's life and property for the State. The State is a kind of Moloch in his philosophy. Time after time the people must offer their finest sons in the supposed sacred ceremonialism of the State. In his later years Treitschke

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found a very different idea of the State growing in the new generation. Men and women were concluding that the State was a social group, under the security of which their lives would be blessed with greater happiness and prosperity. This is really what Treitschke means by "materialism." One smiles to-day at the obstinate and antiquated views, but in their time they served the purpose of Prussian ambition, and we still find echoes of Treitschke's sonorous voice in the Press of modern Germany.

In another place, Treitschke attempts to show in a different way the peculiar fitness of Germany to carry out the mission of civilisation. He sums up the supposed advantages which Germany has by entering at a late date into the family of great Powers. Most of us realise that this late accession to power has brought with it one great

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disadvantage. A new Power, like a young man, is apt to have inflated ideas of its strength and its future. It is hardly more than forty years since Germany became a great manufacturing State, and again we must make some allowance for a very natural conceit which arises from the consciousness of this prosperity in the present generation. Older nations like England, long accustomed to a similar prosperity, have ceased to use the bombastic language which it at first inspires. When we smile at the language of German writers, we have only to turn back a few pages in English history to find precisely similar language used by Englishmen. Treitschke, however, with his pseudo-scientific method, tries to convince his university students that Germany is really in a different position from other States. He says:

“ We are later in our political development

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than other European States, and therefore we can be more universal. We have been able to make use of the wisdom of our predecessors, as is seen in the development of our literature. Beyond question Germany has, in the nineteenth century, taken the lead in political science, after having depended on foreigners for two centuries. The way in which the threads of our destiny have been broken at times, and the tortuous course of our history, have at least had the advantage of preserving us from the political traditions and prejudices which confuse the political thought and judgment of other peoples. The complex action of our State is due to our position in the world, our history, and our geographical circumstances, in virtue of which we are able to do things which seem to other nations impossible. . . . We are, moreover, the most monarchical people in Europe, although with this we must also combine a

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considerable measure of popular representation. We have solved the problem how an educated people can be an armed people; and we will solve the still more difficult problem, how a wealthy people can secure for itself the moral advantages of an army and of war. It is especially the many-sidedness of the German character which has enabled us to overcome all our difficulties, and this conquest is a large part of our importance and greatness" (*Politik*, I., 86).

I will not stay to discuss the evidently strained argument of this passage. Treitschke is fond of pouring ridicule on the men who took their wisdom from books only, instead of studying the facts of life at first hand. Considering that almost the whole of the wisdom of this deaf man was necessarily drawn from books, we see that he is merely quarrelling with people who differ from him.

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His learning is purely bookish, and his theories have been built up without any control from the facts of life. However, he goes on to show that these peculiar advantages of Germany not only explain its present greatness, but justify its constant dream of further expansion. We saw in the previous chapter how, even in his later years, he spoke quite openly of the further growth of Germany at the expense of its neighbours, and in a later chapter we shall see this at greater length. I may, however, quote here a passage in which he justifies this dream from another point of view. He is discussing, in his chief work, the influence of geographical conditions upon the State, and he says :

“ Our evil lot in Germany is due especially to the purely internal policy of the house of Hapsburg. Nature herself has not been generous to Germany. The Baltic is

predominantly an inland sea ; it has very little influence on the inhabitants of the regions round about it. Two hours' journey from the coast in Pomerania you would not suspect that you were near the sea. The German coast of the North Sea is ruined by shoals. All that is as unfavourable as possible, yet we see here again how man can overcome natural obstacles. This Germany, with its miserable coast, was once the greatest sea power in the world, *and, please God, it will be again* (p. 216).

“ In the matter of rivers, Germany, to which nature has in so many things been a step-mother, is very fortunate—if it realises its destiny and some day takes entire possession of its rivers. Our Rhine is the King of Rivers. What great deed was ever done on the Danube ? On the Rhine you have the quintessence of historical life, wherever you

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go. It is an invaluable natural possession, yet by our own fault the most useful part of it has passed into foreign hands, and it is the unalterable aim of German policy to regain the mouth of the river. A purely political union is not necessary since the Dutch have become an independent nation: but an economic union is indispensable. And we are greatly to be pitied when we dare not say openly that the inclusion of Holland in our customs-union is as necessary for us as our daily bread. Nowhere in the world do fools talk so much about Chauvinism as in Germany, and nowhere else is there so little Chauvinism. We are afraid to speak about the most natural claims that a nation can have (p. 218).

“The law of the need of a State to keep together geographically is so plain that we are surprised at the short-sightedness of the

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members of the Vienna congress who, out of jealousy, imposed such a ragged and ridiculous form on Prussia. No State of any power could long remain in this condition. Prussia had to choose between giving up its western territory or, directly or indirectly, controlling the lands which cut it off" (p. 221).*

These ingenious arguments are, however, strengthened by the whole of Treitschke's reading of history. Once more he makes a mistake which is not uncommon, and in the middle of the nineteenth century was not

* The two volumes of university lectures which have been published by Max Cornicelius with the title of *Politik* were not really written by Treitschke. We cannot therefore suppose that we have his exact words in every case. The editors have used the note-books of the students and the fairly abundant notes left by Treitschke himself; and the work was submitted to a number of old students of Treitschke before it was published. We have therefore an assurance that at least no sentiment is attributed to Treitschke in this work without full authority.

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unnatural. He surveys history with a conviction that what was in the beginning always will be. He sees that certain nations have made a deep impression on the chronicle of man, and it has become the custom to speak of every nation which makes such an impression as a "great" nation. He further sees, as we must all recognise, that the power of these great military nations has often led to prosperity, and has encouraged the growth of art and high sentiments. The mistake of Treitschke, as of many historians, is to think that because in a warlike age a nation needed this powerful protection of its luxury and its culture, such protection would remain necessary under any conceivable circumstances. That, however, we will discuss more fully in dealing with his glorification of war. We must remember that it colours his entire treatment of the question of the greatness of

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a State. Greatness means to him historical greatness. All the other considerations which he brings forward are only artificial supports of his central idea. He says somewhere : " It is the nature of historical genius to be national. There never was an historical hero who was not national. Wallenstein never reached the highest historical fame because he was not a national hero but a Czech [like Treitschke], posing as a German for his own purposes. He was, like Napoleon, a great adventurer of history. The really great historical genius is always inspired by nationality ; and that is equally true of the writer. A great writer is a man who writes in such fashion that all his compatriots respond " (*Politik*, p. 23).

When we remember that Treitschke is the great popular historian of Germany, and picture to ourselves how he infused these

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sentiments into what is in itself a great record, we can easily understand the enormous influence that he has had. In whatever way his pupils have gone beyond his principles in various directions, none have surpassed him in the glorification of Germany. His *History of Germany*, in five large volumes, is a work of considerable research and general accuracy. Probably we should not rank him as a great historian from the ordinary scientific point of view. We have already seen that his position as Historian of the Prussian State and lecturer on history at Berlin was largely political. He was a useful instrument for the carrying out of Bismarck's policy. But this position enabled him to reach a large audience and to speak with weighty authority. He is one of the chief inspirers of the megalomania of so large a part of the German people. He tells the story of the making of Germany with a

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natural eloquence of the greatest sincerity. He always disdained style. The style, he said, is the man. But the sincerity and the ardent feeling give his narrative a kind of eloquence which is more convincing than the elegant art of a Gibbon or the greater learning of a Mommsen. With this natural art he tells the story of Germany in such a fashion as to bring out what he believes to be its unique genius. Every emperor, every statesman, and every soldier shares the greatness of the German spirit, and on every page he presses home the advantages which Germany has derived by a loyal co-operation with its rulers.

We shall perhaps find much that startles us in connection with the present war more intelligible after this examination of some of the pages of Treitschke's works. We have very naturally poured ridicule on the Emperor's

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claim to be on terms of intimacy with the Almighty. Even this outrageous claim, however, finds justification in the works of the official historian of Prussia. His impressive theory of the Reformation and the results of the Reformation puts Germany on a level with the ancient Jews as the chosen people of God. When learned professors use such language we can hardly be surprised that peasant soldiers enthusiastically repeat it. From the middle class, to which Treitschke immediately addressed himself, his message has gone down to the lowest circles of German society. Hundreds of his pupils have become journalists, and in the more flippant and more exaggerated language of the daily paper, they have spread the teaching of Treitschke throughout the country. So the present temper of the nation has been created. So the millions have marched out under the

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eagles, as deeply convinced as the ancient Romans were that their Fatherland is the greatest power of the world, and has a mission to share its power with the world by the painful process of conquering it. We can well understand that military men smile in private at the pretensions of this gospel. But it serves their purpose. The Emperor himself is evidently convinced of the truth of Treitschke's account of the genius of the Hohenzollerns. How far he and other leaders of Germany sincerely accept the idea of divine mission or of a unique genius it is impossible to say. They find, as such rulers always have found, as Bismarck found fifty years ago, that a patriotic pedant has his uses, and so the Gospel of Treitschke has been encouraged in every section of the German nation.

CHAPTER III

VILIFICATION OF ENGLAND

THE second chief element in the German temper which we are confronting to-day, is the disdainful attitude towards England; or, at all events, the profession of disdain for England. For the explanation of this we need hardly go back to the writers of the last generation. The time having arrived in the mind of German Imperialists when a further expansion seemed possible, it was at once perceived that England's command of the sea stood in the way. Further, German readers are well acquainted with English literature, and they must have noticed, with a satisfaction which was dangerous in their frame of mind, our

admiration for many of their institutions. In addition, the theory encouraged by many historians that nations have a certain period of life and then decay, by some internal principle, has spread widely in Germany. This supposed historical law has no serious foundation whatever. A civilisation may last for 8,000 years, like that of ancient Egypt, or 4,000 years, like that of China, or 400 years, like that of Athens or of Florence. It depends entirely upon the circumstances and upon the neighbours of a particular State. The theory, however, pleased the German. His country was comparatively new and young as a great Power, while England had been a great Power for four or five centuries. He therefore flippantly repeated the remarks of English pessimists, and persuaded himself that England was in a state of decay. When the passions of war arose, it was very easy for

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this to take the form of the contempt which is expressed in the German Press to-day. Possibly the solid prosperity of England in the last ten years, and the unexpected importance of her share in the war, have only made the Germans more bitter against us.

It is of interest to see how far Treitschke used his influence to encourage this disdain of England. His opportunities were very considerable. In reviewing the history of the last century, he constantly found England connected with the interests of Germany. He was, moreover, rather an economist than an historian. His subject was statecraft rather than history. His historical narrative is always coloured by its relation to his ideal of a State. He has, therefore, not only to refer constantly to the historical conduct of England, but it is part of his plan to study and to criticise English institutions. The

petty spirit in which he does this may be shown in a humorous illustration. In justice to Treitschke it should be stated that he frequently writes with appreciation of English institutions. He never writes with admiration, but the facts are too strong occasionally for his prejudice, and he does justice to a few of the features of English life. On the whole he is unjust, and he is frequently ridiculous. In comparing the rival military systems of England and Germany, for instance, he pens the following egregious passage :

“ It is a defect of the English civilisation that it does not include compulsory military service. Some compensation for this is found in the very large development of the Fleet, and in the fact that continuous small wars in the Colonies keep the strength of the nation constantly employed and ever fresh. It is due to these incessant colonial wars that there

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is a good deal of physical robustness in England. Still, when we examine carefully, we find a serious defect in the country. The lack of chivalry in the English character, which falls so far short of the simple loyalty of the German, is largely connected with the fact that physical exercise is not sought in the use of manly weapons, but in the pastimes of boxing, swimming and rowing. These forms of exercise have a certain amount of value, it is true, but it is quite clear that these sports give rise to the athletic mind, with all its crudeness and with a superficial sentiment which is always looking for the first prize" (*Politik*, I, 362).

When one looks back on this observation of a learned professor, made in the lecture-room of one of the chief universities of Germany, and then thinks of the horrible outrages that were committed in the first month of the

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war by the German soldiers, frequently under the direct control of their officers, one can see only the most obstinate prejudice in the mind of Treitschke. No word is more common in his glorification of the German character than loyalty and chivalry. We have seen their chivalry in the last few months. Instead of relying entirely on that bravery of the soldier which few would question, we have found Germany using a second army, all over the world, to do a kind of work which is the very opposite of chivalry ; nor does their persistent war upon civilians strike us as being very chivalrous. On the other hand, little complaint of a serious or well-founded nature has been made against the conduct of the French, English and Belgian troops. We must remember that they are fighting in their own country and have not the temptation of the German soldier, yet one need not examine the conduct

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of the English troops on the field of battle in order to learn their character. The whole reference to the moral effect upon character of athletic exercises is preposterous in the extreme. Treitschke evidently had no insight whatever into the real character of other nations.

A more serious part of his work is to explain to the young men of Germany the nature of the English constitution. Here, as a representative of the highest political culture of Germany, one might expect him to proceed at least with accuracy and candour. Instead of this one finds him giving descriptions of English institutions which are absolutely ridiculous.

One may make some allowance for the effect of his own ideal of a State. Absolute monarchy is to him the perfect form of State, because absolute monarchy is the Prussian

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form. Possibly no historian could survey the States of modern and ancient times in the way that Treitschke does, without allowing his description to be coloured by his own political views. For such prejudice we are prepared to make an allowance, yet this allowance cannot for a moment excuse some of the extraordinary pages, which Treitschke devotes to English institutions and the English character.

I will quote a long passage in which he deals with what he regards as the primary institution of a State, that is to say, the monarchy. Before doing so I should recall Treitschke's main idea in connection with the State. The State is power, something apart from, and superior to, the body of citizens and their interests. Treitschke therefore needs to find some mystical basis for this power, and he can only fall back on the old and outworn idea of legitimacy. One must bear this in mind

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in reading his singular account of Royalty in England. After giving a glowing and exaggerated account of the successive Kings of Prussia, he turns to England. England being a constitutional monarchy, and therefore opposed to his own ideal, he deals with it in this peculiar fashion :

“ The principle that even in a constitutional state the crown rests on its own right—the old Norman idea that all power and law proceed from the king—is still maintained in theory in England, and, as far as ceremony is concerned, it is scrupulously followed. But when we look into the question more closely we find, as we do everywhere in English life, that subtle hypocrisy to which the English give an untranslatable name [cant]. The droning of the parson is heard in everything and every body, not only in the Church, but in the best London society, which is as frivolous as that

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of Paris, though it outwardly assumes an atrociously dull respectability. It is just the same in political life. This constitutional cant, as an able writer of our time has called it, has always affirmed the legitimacy of the Guelphs. But what are the facts? English royalty, in its legitimate and genuine form, was destroyed by the second English revolution; James II. was the last real king of England. William III. was a throne-stealer, pure and simple; the 'glorious revolution' was a very thorough revolution, and after it occurred all the traditions of royalty began to disappear. William III. was, owing to his genial character, able to play the part of a king; but from that time royalty became royalty by the grace of Parliament. In the Act which called William to the throne, it is expressly said that King James II. has by his own act, broken the treaty between the Prince

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and his People, and forfeited the throne. This is one of the things that doctrinaires in constitutional law never refer to ; modern English constitutional law is based on the false theory of an original contract. The Guelphs moreover, were called to the throne of England by an Act of Parliament, and they had not the slenderest title to that throne ; the whole of the twenty-five Stuarts who had a better claim to the throne, were passed over. The title in virtue of which the House of Hanover rules to-day, and the house of Coburg will go on ruling, is an Act of Parliament which, in spite of legitimate right, put upon the throne certain distant relatives of the dethroned royal family. Now, since it is the very essence of monarchy that its power should be based on its own rights, it must be clear to every impartial person, that the English constitution is not very far from being an aristocratic

republic ; because, in spite of the almost slavish etiquette that is followed, the real power is taken from the king, and he derives his title to rule from an arbitrary Act of Parliament instead of from his own historical right.

“ That is a peculiar and intolerable state of things, and it is made worse by personal features of the English kings which have been inherited with remarkable fidelity. William III. was the last man of any importance to sit on the throne of England, and even he, being a usurper and a foreigner, never had the full power of a king. His successors have so entirely lost personal significance that, foreign usurpers as they were, they could not preserve their independent rights in face of the national pride of the nobility. A Duke of Norfolk has not much reason to look with awe upon a German prince [!] The first two Georges were

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not Englishmen. George I. never even understood the English language, and he had to come to an understanding with his ministers by means of dog-Latin. He never attended a council of ministers. This development goes on to-day. It has got to such a pitch that the king's name is never mentioned in Parliament, *because he is no longer of any consequence* [nichts mehr bedeutet noch bedeuten soll]. George III. made the last attempts in England to rule as a personal monarch. They began with the betrayal of Frederick the Great [it is well known that the action of England almost preserved Prussia and Frederick the Great from destruction], and ended in shame and mockery by accelerating the secession of the North American colonies. Such were the consequences of the last attempt at personal rule made by a narrow-minded prince. When, in our day, the Prince Consort attempted to

rule in the German manner, he found that it was impossible to do so in England¹. He gave up the attempt, and contented himself with teaching his wife how to occupy with a certain dignity her ridiculous position between the two parties, which she did with considerable grace.

“To sum up these English characteristics, we see how it was that Montesquieu could assert that distrust must be the prevailing spirit in a constitutional monarchy ; an appalling theory, basing a noble institution on one of the lowest impulses of human nature. Yet it is to-day the dogma of all sections of Radicalism, however little they may care to express it openly. Even my good friend Dahlmann used to say, that in constitutional States political liberty had possibly less to fear from mediocre monarchs, than from really great men. Strange words for a noble-minded

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and able man to speak: as if genius, which was always a gift of Heaven, could become a public danger.

“It is evidently not desirable, even if it were possible, to transfer to other States a royalty like that of England, ossified as it is by peculiar historical circumstances. Common sense tells us that those political institutions are best, which can do most good in the hands of capable men. Hence any man who says that a kingdom must be so established that it will work best under mediocre rulers is talking nonsense. The whole education of English princes is, nevertheless, directed on these lines, and it has succeeded wonderfully in maintaining the hereditary nullity of the Guelph line. No member of the family who is in a position to aspire to the throne is a soldier, in the best sense of the word. And the present situation is such that, without claiming

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the gift of prophecy, we may say confidently that for the next two generations the house of Coburg will sustain all the features of the house of Guelph. This is part of the essence of the English State, but we Germans will not abandon common-sense, and will not propose to our people to cut off a sound limb in order to replace it by a skilfully-made artificial limb. We have had experience, and we have found that our constitutional monarchy is of such a nature, that it works best under great monarchs. It is not the work of a constitutional polity to rob royalty of all significance; on the contrary, it must keep royalty fresh and living even among the peoples that have reached political maturity. With us royalty is almost the sole power of political tradition which links our present with the past. Do we want English Georges instead of our far-famed Hohenzollerns? The history of our

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monarchy is so magnificent that a Prussian may very well say, 'The best monarch is good enough for us.' According to our constitution all power is vested in the monarch. Any one who denies this will have to prove his charges against our constitution, on the basis of certain foreign elements which have become historical. Thus the first element of the English constitution is an illegitimate and powerless monarchy" (*Politik*, II, 132-136).

It would be waste of time to discuss this passage in detail. Treitschke seized upon peculiar elements of the English constitution and entirely misrepresented them.

His main error is, of course, his obstinate refusal to grant any real right of self-government to a people. I need not, however, deal at such length with his further descriptions of English institutions. He passes on to our aristocracy, in which he finds "a great political

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capacity and enormous power." He fancies that in England the aristocracy has completely swallowed up the independent peasantry, "which is the strength of Germany," and that it dominates the Houses of Parliament. He seems to be strangely confused as to the state of England before the Reform Bill and in recent times, although he observes that many changes occurred in 1832. His description of the actual state of things really refers to the older days. The Lords, he says, nominate the members of the Lower House. The House of Commons does not in any sense represent the people. It is ruled by the nobles through their younger sons, and cousins, and other dependents. Thus the monarchy is "a shadow," and democracy does not exist. England is ruled by "a well-ordered and powerful aristocracy."

He further finds that the rival parties are

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kept together by "colossal bribery," and he ends: "To live in such circumstances may be very pleasant, but it is ridiculous to hold up such a system as a model to the German State, with its strict sense of justice." He closes the whole comparison of English and German political institutions with this remarkable passage: "We have, it is true, borrowed a few knick-knacks from England. With us also the King's name is not to be mentioned in Parliament. The English—who have always been expert in flattery of this kind—say that it is no more lawful to take the name of the King in vain than the name of God. This Guelph royalty, the first representative of which did not know the language of his country and could not attend the council, has now no influence at all. It is of no consequence what Queen Victoria thinks about a political question. And that is supposed to

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be a model for our country, where the King speaks very good German! In Germany the will of the King still counts for something. That is especially the case in Prussia, the only place which still has a real monarch; a ruler who is entirely independent. In Prussia a cowardly minister cannot shelter himself behind the monarch when he addresses Parliament. If in a particular case he says, 'Don't decide to do that, gentlemen; I tell you confidently that we shall not be able to persuade his Majesty to assent,' there is no reason why we should not."

Treitschke betrays the same petty and unscientific spirit almost whenever he approaches any feature of English life. One or two instances will suffice to show how he inoculated the young men of the German middle class, with that disdain of England which has led to such tragic consequences.

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Many of his colleagues of a less prejudiced nature, were pointing out the indisputable merits which the Reform period had introduced into English law and practice. Treitschke rarely failed to say precisely the opposite, and to pour ridicule on the claim that any feature of English life could with profit be adopted in Germany. Sometimes he is curiously inaccurate, as in the following contrast: "In England the punishment of political crimes is severe to the verge of cruelty; in Germany, under the influence of radical ideas, it is the fashion to take a sentimental view of political crimes." Those who recollect the treatment, let us say, of Colonel Lynch at the time of the South African war, will read with surprise this observation of the learned professor. One would imagine that it was in England, not in Germany, that a brilliant historical writer can be committed

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to a fortress for three years for making very natural comments on the words of the monarch.

In another place he deals with the contrast in the authority of the police. He says: "Germany proceeds on the principle that it is not good to restrict too much the discretionary power of the authorities; England gives the police no discretionary power at all. The result is that a state of war is constantly announced in England; not a year passes without the reading of the Riot Act in some part of the United Kingdom." Finally, I may quote his reflection on a liberty which so many Germans envy us in England:

"In the conception of personal freedom there is included some security against arbitrary arrest. England has been exceptionally zealous on this point. The famous clause of Magna Charta, that no one shall be arrested without a warrant, is undoubtedly

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a great achievement; but it is equally true that in large modern cities this right is antiquated. In a well-ordered State, where the police are punished for exceeding their powers, and one can rely on the punishment being carried out, they should be free to enter the houses of citizens in the larger towns. To regard as secret the resorts of thieves and other evil houses is absurd. You see the consequences in London, where the most terrible crimes escape detection" (*Politik*, I, 169).

After this defence of the Prussian system of autocracy, and the despotism of the Prussian police, Treitschke passes on to examine what are believed to be some of the most important reforms of English political life as regards the representation of the people. To most sociologists of any country the ballot-box, or the secrecy of the vote, is one of the most impor-

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tant of these reforms. Treitschke is so unwilling to admit any superiority in any field of English life, that he actually delivers an eloquent and highly moral attack upon the ballot-box. He, of course, opposes any effective system of popular representation. Men with lungs, he says, obtain the greater power under institutions of that character; and he bitterly opposes any extension of the miserable franchise that is allowed in Prussia. One would have thought at least that he could recognise the propriety, if not the civic excellence, of the ballot-box, and the long passage which he has on that subject is worth quoting, as an example of the way in which German students were initiated at Berlin to the features of English life. He says:

“In connection with the spread of this irrational claim for a wider franchise, there has been introduced the equally irrational,

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and at the same time immoral, secret vote. By the secrecy of the vote people are supposed to enjoy an independence which they really do not possess. We are fools to talk about our educated and free age when we have lost the simplest natural feeling of honour. It is precisely these free political institutions, which have brought on men certain moral mischiefs, of which our fathers in less free times never dreamed. If the parliamentary vote is to be regarded as the highest duty of a citizen, let it at least be exercised in a form which does not seem repugnant to a man of honour and some sense of freedom; that is to say, let it be exercised in public and with full responsibility. A man who feels no disgust when he goes to the ballot-box and stealthily puts his vote into it, has no sentiment of political honour. There is nothing whatever in the arguments for the ballot-box.

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It is not the business of the State to weaken its citizens morally. It is a real conflict of duties when father and son hold different political views, but the son must openly declare which he holds to be highest, his political conviction or his sentiment of gratitude to his father. It is not the business of the State to prevent such conflicts. They did not have that kind of thing in older England. Until the nineteenth century a secret vote was regarded as a sign of thorough corruption. Now our press has got the idea that it is freedom to hide behind a bush, or a ballot-box. This is the result of extending the vote to classes which ought not to vote because they are not independent enough.

“Moreover, people who talk like this show a remarkable ignorance of real life. In the country, especially among the poor, it is quite impossible to keep secret the way that any

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person has voted. Even in the towns there are all sorts of ways of discovering how a man has voted. So we come down in the end to the basest device to which 'the sense of liberty' has brought us: the voter must go into a sort of smoking-room, and there fill up a form provided by the Government. That is a pretty state of things for men with any sense of decency! Such secret proceedings completely destroy the feeling of manliness, and the State dangles the lie before millions of workers, who know quite well that they are really dependent. There can be no question whatever but that such a system is thoroughly immoral. What a man personally feels as a disgrace must have a demoralising effect on the community. But our enlightened age is so stubborn in this respect that we have no hope of reform. We are rearing a race that will be incapable

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of thinking candidly and rightly. The results will be seen soon enough, and they will be lamentable. It is a question rather of a moral than of a political nature" (*Politik*, II, 182).

These will serve as interesting illustrations of that *Kultur* which Treitschke would have liked to see imposed upon other nations. I reserve, however, for a later chapter the conception of a well-ordered State, as it is presented in Treitschke's writings. I would conclude with one other extract which shows how Treitschke can hardly ever approach the subject of England, without a prejudice which makes his lectures almost ridiculous. One aspect of statecraft which he has to consider is, naturally, the influence of physical conditions upon the people. This gives him the opportunity once more to make a contrast between England and Germany :

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"In estimating the climate and other natural features of a country, we are chiefly keeping in mind their influence on its material life. The moral and æsthetic points of view are of secondary importance, and must not be exaggerated. The moist and foggy climate of England has had anything but a good influence on the inhabitants. There are times in London when the fog is so dense that the spleen fills the atmosphere. Moreover, England has no wine, and wine is unquestionably an important factor of a genial and free civilisation. . . . The climate and the absence of wine and the lack of beautiful scenery [!] have undeniably had a bad effect on English civilisation. The English can boast of great literature, but they have never attained any distinction in music or the plastic arts" (*Politik*, I, 224). Again it would be waste of time to discuss these extraordinary views of

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English life and character. We must, however, seriously consider how this persistent habit of belittling the English people has had a share in creating the anti-British temper in Germany. I would not over-estimate Treitschke's influence in this regard. There have been so many incentives to anti-British feeling in recent years in Germany, that one need not go back to lectures delivered in a university forty years ago. The passages are, perhaps, more important for showing the kind of civilisation which Germany would, if it had the power, impose upon other countries. With this I will deal at a later stage, and will for the present consider those sentiments which have a more direct connection with the present war.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

CHAPTER IV

THE PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

WE have already seen the central idea of Treitschke's system of thought. The State is power. This means at once that he will exaggerate, more than any other civilian writer has ever done, the importance of war in a State. And here we come to the third and almost the most important aspect of Treitschke's influence. He and other German writers recognise, even boast, that they have imposed the present exacting burden of militarism on Europe. To Treitschke, though a civilian, it is easy to defend this development. His view of history is, as I pointed out, really superficial. He does not believe

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in "cold-blooded objectivity" in writing history. Every line of his studies and his writings has an application to the problems of the State to-day. We may say, without hesitation, that, apart from the soldiers of Germany, he has done more than any other writer to encourage the abnormal and dangerous zeal for military greatness which has now proved so disastrous.

"History," he says, "has wholly masculine features; it is not a thing for sentimental natures and women. Brave peoples alone are secure of existence, of a future, of development; weak and lazy peoples go under. The beauty of history lies in this eternal for and against of the various States. It is simply madness to desire to put an end to this rivalry. So humanity has found in all ages." Or, as he expresses it on another page of his great work: "It is only in war that a people really

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becomes a people ; and in the majority of cases the expansion of existing States proceeds by way of acquisition by conquest, though the results of the struggle may afterwards be recognized by treaty."

According to Treitschke the State has two chief functions : to administer justice within its frontiers and assert its power without. Most people to-day regard the second as an accidental and, we trust, temporary function of the State, but Treitschke would not hear of such a view. In his theory the military function is essential to the State, and it would be a positive disaster to humanity if a condition of peace arose which would enable us to dispense with armies. This is one of the results of his new science of statecraft. He says :

" As long as the State was regarded as an economic institution, the view prevailed in

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Germany that the economic principle of division of labour should apply to the army. Professional and well-drilled soldiers were needed to shield the life of the citizens from the confusion of war. But hard and bitter experience has changed all this, and to-day even the ordinary man feels that the military system is of more importance than economic interests—is, in fact, of incalculable importance; that there is question here of moral forces, and that these are best aroused and applied under a system of compulsory military service ” (*Politik* I, 143).

The claim that war engenders moral forces is not entirely novel in the literature of this subject, but in Treitschke's writings it is carried to a remarkable length. Many writers have claimed that physical degeneration would follow the abandonment of warfare, and some few have declared that there are features of

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character which warfare does favourably develop. Very few, however, have written in this vein in regard to war :

“ Gibbon calls patriotism ‘ the vivid feeling of my interest in society,’ but, if you conceive the State as merely designed to ensure for the individual his life and property, how comes it that the individual will sacrifice his life and property for the State ? It is a fallacy to suppose that wars are now waged in the interest of material life. Modern wars do not aim at the seizure of property. They are inspired by the lofty moral possession of national honour, which is handed down from generation to generation ; which has something absolutely sacred about it and forces the individual to sacrifice himself to it. It is a possession above price, and cannot be measured in dollars and pence ” (*Politik* I., 24).

He finds a quaint illustration of this in the German war of 1866; and in other places he makes the same comment on the Franco-Prussian war. His claim takes the singular form that war between two States enables the nations to appreciate each other's qualities more justly, and links them in a stronger friendship than peace would ever have produced. One wonders how such a theory will apply to the respective relations of England and France, and Belgium and Germany, after the present trouble is over. He says:

“ We Germans cannot appreciate too highly the fact that our Revolution of 1866 did not take the form of a popular movement and popular settlement, as in Italy, but the form of a war. The result was that the Prussian Crown, which marshalled its physical forces, was in a position to restore order. We may add that a transformation of a milder

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character was not at that time possible. If we suppose that the feeling of the masses for German unity was so strong that it would have led to revolution, the conquered and the conquerors would even now live in a state of enmity ; whereas the war and the generous conclusion of peace filled the opponents with mutual appreciation, and so far united them that four years later they, like true comrades, joined their arms against France " (I., 136).

It is, however, in surveying the general stream of history, that Treitschke makes his most formidable mistake. The historian is naturally apt to enlarge upon a nation in the prime of its life, and the full glory of its achievements. It occurs to him that, if it could only have sustained the military power which for a time protected its artists and its merchants, there would never have been the

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ultimate decay which he has to record. Unfortunately, many historians, and Treitschke above all others, fail to analyse the facts justly. It seems, on an impartial consideration, that, with all the will in the world, it was quite impossible for those ancient Empires or States to sustain their military strength. Treitschke forgets that war destroys all the good qualities which militarism creates.

We may admit not only the physical robustness, but, to some extent, the moral qualities which are brought out in a war conducted on lines of chivalry and humanity. The historian must equally recognise that those soldiers in whom these qualities are most richly developed are the first to fall on the field. It is those who are less distinguished by courage and manliness, and it is the inferior types which have not been selected for military

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purposes, that remain at home and are the fathers of the next generation. Throughout nearly the whole of his historical glorification of war, Treitschke is guilty of this oversight. His knowledge in detail is very largely confined to the story of Germany within the last two hundred years. A century or two show us plainly the beginnings of the development of military influence. The nation continues vigorous in spite of its losses, because, by the enlargement of its territory, new groups of peoples have come under the selective action of the military commander. Had Treitschke lived but twenty years longer, he might have seen the culmination of this development in the history of his own country. Against his religious neighbours he used to quote texts of the Bible in support of warfare. He seems to have overlooked one text: "They who take the sword shall perish by

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the sword." If there is one lesson arising plainly from the study of history, it is contained in those simple words.

From the days of Goethe men were perceiving the truth of this real lesson of history. Around him on every side Treitschke found men clamouring for the abandonment of warfare and the substitution of arbitration. It is well known how, openly and secretly, Germany has frustrated this work of progress at the Hague Conferences. Treitschke had a very great share in the obstinate militarism which has prolonged the danger which threatened Europe, until at last it has fallen like an avalanche upon five or six whole nations. The disastrous results he clearly foresaw. It was part of his doctrine—part of his idealism, as he called it—that the State should be able to claim and to receive the utmost sacrifices from its subjects. When, recently, the Ger-

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man Emperor assured his Prussian subjects that he was sure that they would gladly sacrifice their lives and their homes to the needs of the Empire, he was, as in his religious utterances, doing little more than repeating the words of Treitschke. Using every motive at his command, Treitschke, throughout his whole life, tried to impress on the German people, not merely the need, but, as he said, "the sacredness of war." His influence on the German people in regard to war is as great as we have found his influence in regard to the inflated ideal of the German position and future.

The deification of war runs through the whole of Treitschke's theory of a State. Two long extracts will suffice to show how he uses every argument, to impress the eternal need of war and militarism on his university students. In the first section, where he is

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explaining the nature of a State, he says as follows :

“ Without war there would be no State. All the States we know have their origin in war : the armed protection of its citizens is the first and the central duty of the State. Hence war will last as long as history does : as long as there is a plurality of States. That it should ever be otherwise can be deduced neither from the laws of thought nor from the laws of human nature ; nor is it in the least desirable. The blind worshippers of eternal peace make the mistake of isolating the State, or of dreaming of a world-State, which we have already recognised to be irrational.

“ Since it is equally impossible, as we have already seen, even to conceive of a higher judge over States, which are in their nature sovereign, we cannot imagine that the state

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of war will ever cease. It is the fashion of our time to speak of England as a lover of peace. Yet England is always at war; there is hardly a moment in modern history when she has not been fighting somewhere. The great progress of civilised men, as opposed to barbarism and unreason, can only be realised by the sword. Even among civilised peoples war remains the form of the process by means of which States assert their claims. The evidence that is produced in this frightful process is as convincing as the evidence in a civil-law case. How often have we endeavoured to convince small States that Prussia alone can take the lead in Germany; we had to furnish a decisive proof on the battle-fields of Bohemia and the Main. War binds peoples together, it does not merely separate them. It brings people to face each other, not merely in enmity: they learn to understand and

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appreciate each other's qualities. We must also recognise that war is not always the verdict of God ; there are even here temporary successes, but the life of a nation must be counted in centuries. Our final judgment must be based on a survey of great epochs. A State like Prussia, which was, in accordance with the spirit of its people, always freer and more rational than France, might at times seem to be on the verge of extinction, owing to some temporary enervation, but might then recollect its true inner nature and assert its superiority. We must unhesitatingly affirm that war is the only remedy for sick nations. Whenever the State calls, ' My existence is in danger,' social selfishness must disappear and party hatred must be silent. The individual must forget his own personality and realise that he is a member of the whole ; he must feel how little his life is in comparison

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with the good of the whole. Therein consists the nobleness of war, that the smallness of men vanishes before the greater interest of the State. Self-sacrifice for one's fellows is nowhere so splendid as in war. At such times the chaff is separated from the grain. Every man who lived through the year 1870 feels the truth of what Niebuhr said of the year 1813 [the war of 1813 was a war of liberation, not of aggression] that in those days he felt 'the happiness of sharing a sentiment with all his fellow-citizens, learned and simple, and every man who enjoyed it will remember all his life how kindly and strong his soul was at that time.'

"It is precisely political idealism that demands war, while materialism shrinks from it. What a moral perversity it is to wish to strike militarism out of the heart of man! It is a nation's heroes who gladden and inspire

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the hearts of the young; and the writer we admired most, when we were young men, is the man whose words have the sound of a trumpet. The man who does not leap at such a sound is too great a coward to bear arms for his country. It is no use referring to Christianity. The Bible expressly says that authority shall wear the sword, and it declares: 'Greater love than this no man hath, that he should lay down his life for his friends.' They who repeat nonsense about eternal peace do not understand the life of the Aryan peoples: the Aryans are first and foremost brave. They have always been men enough to protect with the sword what they had won by the spirit. Goethe once said: 'The North Germans were always more civilised than the South Germans.' [Goethe had the most profound contempt for Prussia, and loved the South German State of Gotha.]

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Heroism—the maintenance of bodily strength and moral courage—is essential to a noble people.

“We must not look at these things only in the light of the study lamp. The historian who lives in the world of will is convinced that the dream of eternal peace is thoroughly reactionary. He knows that with the cessation of war all movement and all progress will disappear from history. It has always been the exhausted, spiritless, enervated ages that have played with the dream of eternal peace. . . . The third such period is that in which we now live; it is, once more, a period of peace following a great war, which seems to have destroyed all idealism in Germany. Loud and shameless is the laughter of the crowd when something that has contributed to the greatness of Germany is destroyed. The foundations of our noble

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old education are ruined ; all that made us an aristocracy among the nations of the earth is now despised and trodden under foot. It is a fit time for dreaming once more the vision of eternal peace. But it is not worth while lingering over the subject. The living God will take care that the terrible physic of war shall be administered to humanity again and again " (*Politik*, I., 72-76).

Treitschke makes some concession to the dreamers of peace. Inconsistently with his praise of the virtues of war, he contends that it is a benefit of the new military system that wars will become shorter and less frequent. Even in such practical matters as this, where one so intensely interested in militarism might seem to have authority, the events have shown the utter fallacy and hollowness of his position. We are now entering upon the fourth big war in twenty

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years, and this war bids fair to prove more expensive and disastrous than all the wars of the nineteenth century put together. Even in its length it may rival the Napoleonic war.

But we need not linger to examine the hotch-potch of arguments which make up Treitschke's panegyric of war. The last sentence of the passage I have quoted will be sufficient to convince any impartial person of the utterly diseased nature of this great influence on Germany. I would pass on at once to consider the section of Treitschke's work which deals expressly with the military functions of the State. He begins (§23):

"It was a defect of the older politics to regard the army merely as an instrument at the disposal of diplomacy, and to give it a subordinate place in its system, in the chapter on foreign politics. It was regarded only

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as a means of foreign policy. There is no question of such a thing in our age of universal military service. Everybody feels to-day that the army is not merely an instrument for the purposes of diplomacy, but that the constitution of a State rests precisely on the distribution of arms among the people. The State is supported by the ordered physical strength of the nation, and that is the army. If the essence of the State is power, directed both inwards and outwards, the organisation of the army must be one of the first constitutional questions in any State."

Treitschke goes on to argue, plausibly enough, that the army performs a great civil function. Nearly every other institution or element of national life divides the people, or confuses them with the people of other States. Art and science, or all culture in the English sense of the word,

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are cosmopolitan : and cosmopolitanism is to Treitschke, who hates all Jews and all idealists, one of the gravest dangers of modern times. What is ordinarily called politics, on the other hand, splits the nation into hostile parties ; and this element in turn was regarded with bitter contempt by Treitschke. He would have the whole nation listening in silence to the dictates of the monarch and his soldiers and historians. The great instrument for bringing about this docile unity is the army. "In the army alone do the citizens feel that they are sons of their country," and "the King is its natural commander." He goes on : "An adequate equipment of the army is also the foundation of political freedom, so that we need not waste pity on States that have a powerful and well-drilled army. In this province academical theories have suffered the most amusing defeats

at the hand of facts. Everybody who calls himself liberal speaks of the ideal of disarmament toward which modern States are hastening. But what does the history of the nineteenth century really teach us? Precisely the contrary. Armament grows heavier each year, and, as it is the same in all States, this cannot be due to accident. There is some radical defect in the whole theory of the Liberals. The State is not an academy of arts, or an Exchange: it is power, and it belies its own nature when it neglects the army" (*Politik*, II., 357).

Treitschke turns once more upon reformers in Germany who are pleading the economy of the English system. He points out, quite naturally, that the position of England is exceptional. England relies mainly upon her fleet, and her example cannot apply to

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Germany. But, with his constant disposition to seek those ingenious arguments which German writers are apt to regard as profound, he gives us a remarkable passage on the English army. He observes that the position of the army in England has been entirely irregular since the days of the Puritans. Parliament then disbanded the army and “since that time English people have regarded the army as a tool of the State, which might be used even against the will of the nation; and when a second revolution set up a shadow of royalty by the grace of Parliament, the Mutiny Act was passed.” This is, he says, a ridiculous contrast to the position of the army in Germany. “With us the institution of the army is precisely a result of the law. The military law of 1814, one of the greatest debts we owe to Prussia, is the basis of a comprehensive legislation. Hence our army

is on a legal footing and not, as in England, an anomaly." He continues:

"Could there be any greater humiliation than to sympathise with our country because it has the advantage over England of a large army? For it is an advantage to have a large and well-equipped army, because the army is not only intended to be of use in supporting a nation's foreign policy, but a high-minded nation with a glorious history can employ the army for a long period as a dormant weapon; and, in addition, it provides for the people a school of the really manly virtues which are so easily lost sight of, in an age of commerce and pleasure. We must acknowledge that there are men of a fine artistic nature who cannot tolerate the military discipline. We often hear these people speaking in a very perverse way about military service. But in such things we

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cannot make laws for exceptional natures: we must, according to the old rule, deal with the *mens sana in corpore sano*. Bodily strength is especially important in times like ours. It is a defect of the English civilisation that it does not include compulsory military service. . . .

[Here follows the humorous passage relating to the coarseness of English character on account of the prevalence of sport instead of military drill which I have quoted above.]

“The normal and rational course for a great nation is to embody the essence of its State, which is power, in a well-drilled army. And as we have lived through a period of war, the over-sensitive, philanthropic way of looking at these things has rather gone out of fashion, so that, with Clausewitz, we again regard war as a great extension of politics. All the peace-pipe-smokers in the world will not

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succeed in bringing harmony into the views of the political Powers, and until that is done the sword alone can decide between them. We have learned to appreciate the moral majesty of war precisely in those features which seem to superficial observers brutal and inhuman. It seems, at first, the most terrible feature of war that a man must, for his country's sake, crush his natural feelings of humanity; that men who have never done any harm to each other, and have perhaps even respected each other as chivalrous enemies, shall now proceed to murder each other; yet this is at the same time one of the glories of war. A man shall sacrifice not only his life, but also the natural and deep-rooted feelings of the human soul—he shall give his whole personality—for a great patriotic idea: that is the moral grandeur of war. If we consider the matter further, we see that war, with

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all its hardness and crudeness, weaves a bond of love between man and man ; since in war all social distinctions disappear, and the threat of death links man with man. Any man who knows history knows that it would be a stultification of human nature to wish to eliminate warfare from the world. There is no liberty without war-like action, which is ready to make sacrifices for liberty. We cannot repeat too often that scholars, in discussing these matters, start with the assumption that the State is destined to be an academy of arts and sciences. It ought, of course, to do the work of such an academy, but that is not its first task. When a State neglects its physical strength in favour of intellectual culture it is lost.

“ We see everywhere that the greatness of historical life acts on character more than on culture : the driving forces of history must

be sought in fields where character is formed. None but brave peoples have a real history. In the great crises of a nation's life we see that the warlike virtues are decisive. In war nations show of what they are capable: not only in the way of physical strength, but also in moral, and, to some extent, intellectual strength" (*Politik*, II., 361-364).

"Since the army is the orderly political strength of the State, it must be Power, and not have a will of its own; it must yield absolute obedience to the will of the head of the State. It cannot be denied that this absolute subjection to the will of the head of the State is a hard experience. But it is important to notice that the political liberty of a people is based precisely on this requirement, which Radical talkers are always decrying as reactionary. All political security

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would be at an end if the army had a will of its own (p. 365).

“ From this duty of absolute obedience it follows that there must be one single oath of fidelity, and this must direct the soldier with perfect clearness whom he must obey. You cannot promise to sacrifice your life under certain conditions. To compel young men, for the most part of the poorer class, to promise to obey the King *and also* the constitution; in other words, to place before them the alternative of obeying either one or the other in case of conflict is sheer nonsense. There is an end of discipline if you make the soldier the judge whether the constitution has or has not been infringed in a certain case ” (Ref. 366).

Treitschke seems to shudder a little at his own doctrine. He goes on to admit that conscience has its rights, and he declares—

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entirely contradicting what he has already said—that absolute obedience can be promised to no human being. One wonders how far the Prussian military authorities would grant such a concession, but Treitschke goes on at once to show that he is by no means differing from the military authorities. He gives instances in which a man would be justified in refusing to obey orders. The first case is, if he were ordered to kill his father and mother! One cannot see a very large concession to conscience in an extreme supposition of that kind. The second case is if the German soldiers were ordered to “become child-slayers like Herod’s soldiers.” After Belgium we need make no comment on the second of Treitschke’s supposed cases of the soldier’s right to disobey. He continues with his analysis of the State’s military function:

“A soldier’s honour consists in the energy

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and promptness with which he obeys. Hence the unconditional obedience, which, amongst us is pushed with such severity, is a glory and a sign of the splendid spirit of our army. The disdain with which Radicals often speak of this 'dog-like submission' is sheer nonsense. The army training is of very great value in the formation of character. Elderly and able officers are above all things men of fine character [like Major Manteuffel], and are in this respect on a higher level than the average scholar; since learned men have far less opportunity to form their characters. Goethe's immortal words in his 'Tasso' have hit the mark. Silent obedience to superiors and strict orders to inferiors imply an independence of character which must be very highly esteemed. Our Prussian generals have always been liberal-minded men. These facts are so well established that one can

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never cease to wonder at the stupidity of the idea, that an army bound to unconditional obedience is an instrument of slavery: it is rather an instrument of freedom. Anyone who thinks that such an army, pledged by its oath, can be used for a reactionary purpose does not know history (p. 367).

“A brave man who has taken on himself the obligation of unconditional obedience would have no sense of dignity if he were not conscious that, since he was ready to sacrifice his life at any time, he must keep the shield of his honour bright. Anybody who doubts this ascribes his own inferior feelings to the soldier. Hence the military sense of honour is often peculiarly sensitive. There may be abuses, but the fact is in itself wholesome. Even among civilians the duel still survives. In a democratic society the duel is the last protection against the complete barbarism

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of social manners. Men are more or less restrained by the thought that a transgression may cost them their lives ; and it is better for a man in the prime of life to die now and again than for the ways of the whole people to run wild. And with this soldierly feeling of honour is connected the great moral force that is found in the army, and constitutes its strength to a great extent. Officers would lose the respect of their men if they had not a keen sense of honour and refined manners. Moral coarseness has increased in the English army since the duel was abolished ; there have been cases of officers thrashing each other in railway carriages in the presence of their wives. We need not consider how such conduct is bound to lower them in the eyes of their men. The democratic idea that a soldier will obey one of his own class rather than a social superior is the reverse of the truth (370).

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“It is not technical but moral superiority which finally decides the issue of a war. The English soldiers are very good at physical exercises; they are trained to box, and are fed with extraordinary generosity. But people are beginning even in England to see that there is something wanting, and that the English cannot be compared with a national army because the moral energies of the people are shut out from the army. The world is not as materialistic as Wellington supposed. He said that mental development was of no use in the army; it led only to disorder and confusion (371).

“In considering these matters we must keep to the purely moral estimate of institution, as opposed to the purely economic. . . We must never lose sight of the fact that there are things which are beyond all price. Moral goods have no price, and it is therefore stupid

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to attempt to appraise such things as the honour and power of a State in terms of money. What we lost when the flower of our youth fell on the fields of France cannot be estimated in gold. It is unworthy to put moral things on the same level as material” (372).

One need not make any comment on these bewildering claims for the virtues of war. The well-known qualities of the German soldiers and officers are in themselves a crushing reply to the claims of their apologists. Treitschke goes on, since he has discovered the supreme moral value of the modern military system, to claim the merit of it for Prussia ; and we will not refuse to admit that, whether it be an advantage to Europe or otherwise, Germany has the lion's share in imposing the military burden on Europe. I will not, therefore quote the long historical

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proof which he gives that Prussia has, as he says, "the glory of leading modern Europe back to a natural and more moral conception." That is Treitschke's idea of the substitution of vast national armies for the small standing armies which preceded Frederick the Great. He is not blind to the appalling economic burden which this change has imposed on Europe, but, as we have seen, he finds that the moral qualities engendered entirely outweigh the material cost. He goes on :

"The example of the German national army has had a great influence on the rest of Europe. All the raillery that was once directed against it has proved foolish. It was common in foreign countries to shrug one's shoulders in talking of the Prussian *Landwehren*; the Prussian army of children, they called it. Things have turned out very differently. It has been clearly shown that

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in war the moral factors are more important than technical training; and it has also been shown that the increased technical experience of the barracks is accompanied by some moral degeneration (404).

“ On the whole the tendency of the modern system is for peace. A whole people in arms cannot so easily be drawn from its peaceful occupations into an unjustifiable war as a conscription army. Wars are now less common and shorter, though they are bloodier. The desire to get home again gives the men a strong incentive to push on. The normal feeling of a brave, yet peace-loving, national army is that which the Prussian soldiers gave expression to in the summer of 1866: ‘ Let us get to the Danube as quickly as possible, so that we shall get home all the sooner.’ We may say that nothing is impossible to such a national army when it has a glorious history

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to look back upon ; our experience in the last two wars, especially in the Battles of Königgrätz and Mars la Tour, proves this."

This passage again shows what one must almost call the insincerity of Treitschke's argument. If war has all the virtues which he so ingeniously discovers in it, it is hardly a merit of the present system that war should become less frequent and that the soldiers should hasten home again. But the whole argumentation is so flimsy that it would be waste of time to linger over it. We are apt to forget in reading Treitschke that we are listening to words which come, with the full authority of the State, from one of the most learned chairs in Germany. The tragic feature which almost prevents us from enjoying the humour of many of these passages is that this doctrine has been one of the great influences in bringing about the horrors of the

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present war. In a few more years men will perceive in Germany how terribly shortsighted these views were. The enthusiasm of a man who was cut off from his fellows and lived in a world of books and of his own fiery impulses, has led a whole nation to destruction.

It was not only in his university lectures that Treitschke made this glorification of war. In his *Historische und Politische Aufsätze* (I., 782) he makes a violent tirade against the increasing demand in Germany for an International Court of Arbitration. He says :

“ Among the workers there is spreading a theory of the absolute blessedness of peace, which is a scandal to the intelligence and moral energy of our age ; a hotch-potch of phrases, so clear that everybody repeats them, and so miserable that every man who is a man throws them overboard at once when the majesty of war arises in bodily form before

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the people. Theological perversity has not had much to do with these ideas. More dangerous is the thoughtless sympathy of feminine natures, which cannot reconcile themselves to the misery which war causes."

Throughout his whole life he met the great dream of our age with this brutality, but the events of the year 1915 will give a decisive answer to all these miserable pages. It would be more interesting to examine how far Treitschke approved in advance the more unscrupulous and repulsive methods of the military authorities. He rarely, however, enters into details on this subject. I have already quoted the passage in which he not only admits that the soldier must crush every feeling of humanity, but actually boasts that this is one of the moral victories of war. It was reserved for the military pupils and followers of Treitschke to translate these

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general principles into the particular directions which we have seen carried out in the last few months. We shall further see, in the next chapter, that in spite of his high standard of honour. Treitschke makes extraordinary concessions to the spirit of casuistry whenever the supreme interest of the State requires it; and the supreme interest of the State, we must always remember, is, in his opinion, the military interest. We shall find him praising and approving the doctrine of Machiavelli as no other writer in the last one hundred years has dared to do. We shall find him, somewhat shyly it is true, approving lying in the interests of the State. We shall, in fact, find that he imagines his God-directed monarch to be also the monarch of the moral law, and we shall conclude that he has had a share in inspiring even the worst features of this campaign.

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I will conclude this chapter with one or two extracts, which show his attitude towards the growing demand for an international tribunal for the settlement of the disputes of nations. This proposal cuts deeply into the roots of his theory of a State ; what is worse, it cuts even more deeply into the roots of Prussian ambition. Treitschke therefore used his whole influence to cast ridicule on the advancing reform. We need not notice the way in which he argues against it, because of the sacredness and moral efficacy of warfare. I need only reproduce one or two passages in which he makes a display of academic learning against the proposal. He says :

“ We have described the State as an independent Power. This pregnant idea of independence involves a legal autonomy, in such wise that no State can rightly tolerate any

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power over itself; it implies also a political independence, an abundance of means for securing itself against foreign influences. . .

A human society which has abdicated its sovereignty is not a State" (135).

It will be clearly seen that this principle justifies the German State in signing the documents of the Hague Convention, and cancelling its obligations the moment it finds it convenient to do so. But we will see this more clearly in the next chapter. In a later passage of his work Treitschke returns to the question of arbitration. He says:

"From which it follows clearly that the establishment of an International Court of Arbitration as a permanent institution, is not consistent with the nature of a State. It is only in questions of a second or third rank of importance that the State could make use of such a tribunal. When we find people

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putting forward the stupid proposal to treat the question of Alsace as an open question, and submit it to arbitration, we cannot seriously regard this as a non-party proposal. It is a matter of honour for a State to settle such a question itself. There cannot therefore be such a thing as a supreme international tribunal. All that can happen will be that international treaties will become more and more common. But arms will maintain their right to the end of history; and in that precisely consists the sacredness of war" (37-39).

Such is the doctrine that learned professors have joined with statesmen and soldiers in impressing on the mind of Germany during the last fifty years. There is no need to refute it at the present hour. Within another year the ambition of Germany will be shattered, and, in the interest of humanity, the

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vast Empire will be shorn of several large provinces. That will be the answer of the human race to this swollen and diseased military ambition. It is possible that Treitschke's gospel will have an influence in directions which he did not foresee. One can hardly believe that when Europe has lost its great teacher of military ambition, it will continue to shoulder the burden that it has borne so long. The issue of the war may be the supreme triumph of that ideal which Treitschke combated. It will be at least the death of Prussian ambition.

CHAPTER V

IMPERIAL EXPANSION AND
MORAL LAW

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IMPERIAL EXPANSION AND MORAL LAW

WE have already seen how Treitschke has made three great and disastrous contributions to the mood of the German people. His fourth contribution is perhaps more extraordinary and even more disastrous. Treitschke was a man, in every personal relation of life, of the strictest honour and integrity. We must recognise something like insincerity at times in his strained apologies for war and for Prussian ambition. On the whole, however, he was a man of high standards and rigorous fidelity, and one turns with interest to inquire how a man of such a character is related to those features of

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recent German conduct which have proved so repulsive.

We find that Treitschke laid down in advance almost all the immoral principles on which Germany has proceeded. The name of Machiavelli is not in good odour in the modern world. We understand Machiavelli to-day. The fifteenth century was one of the profoundest corruption in Italy, and this corruption was applied in the most licentious way to the international relations of princes and nations. Machiavelli simply made a code of the practices which he found prevalent in his time ; a code which was then followed even by Popes like Leo XIII. With the Humanitarianism of the nineteenth century this code has been rightly disdained, and the principle that honesty is the best policy is gradually being established in the conduct of international life. To our amazement Treitschke makes an eloquent

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defence of Machiavelli, and wishes to restore to honour some of his immoral principles. I related in the first chapter how, as a quite young man, he studied the Florentine politician and was taken with admiration of his principles. In mature age, from the chair of Berlin University, he renews the admiration of his youth. The passage is worth quoting in its entirety, since it involves so many sentiments or principles with a direct application to the present trouble :

“ A great change began when the Reformation issued from the Christian world, and the older authorities collapsed. It is in the midst of this dissolution of all traditional authorities that we must understand the great thinker who co-operated with Martin Luther in emancipating the State. It was Machiavelli who put forward the theory that, when the safety of the State is in danger, there must be

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no scrutiny into the cleanness of the means adopted. Let the State be preserved and everybody will approve the means. Machiavelli must be taken historically to be understood. He belongs to a race which was just passing from the bonds of the Middle Ages into the subjective freedom of modern thought. All around him in Italy he saw the mighty forms of the tyrants in whom the rich endowment of that wonderful people had displayed itself. These Italian tyrants were all born Mæcænæ. They said, like the great artistes: 'I am myself alone.' Machiavelli delighted in these men of power. It will always be his glory to have put the State on its own feet and freed it in its ethic from the Church; and especially that he was the first to announce clearly, 'The State is Power.'

"Yet Machiavelli has still one foot on the threshold of the Middle Ages. Although he

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tries to emancipate the State from the Church and says, with the courage of the modern Italian patriot, that the Roman See has brought misery on Italy, he is still dominated by the idea that morality is a thing of the Church ; and in freeing the State from the Church he cuts it away from moral law altogether. He says that the State has only to look to the purpose of its own power : all that contributes to attain this is good and right. Machiavelli tries to think on the lines of antiquity and does not succeed, because he has eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge : because, without knowing or wishing it, he is a Christian. Hence his view of the freedom of political morals is confused and obscured by his position in an age of transition.

“ That need not prevent us from admitting gladly that the great Florentine was the first, if we regard all the far-reaching consequences

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of his ideas, to introduce into politics the theory that the State is Power. For that is true; and any man who is not manly enough to look the truth in the face must keep his hands off politics. We must never forget this great merit of Machiavelli, even if we clearly recognise the profound immorality, in some respects, of his political theory. What repels us is not that he is entirely indifferent to the nature of the means which power uses, but that he pays so little attention to the question how the supreme power is attained and used, and that this power has no inner meaning for him. He has not the least idea that this power must justify itself by securing the highest moral good of humanity.

“Machiavelli did not see that this sheer theory of power is contradictory even from his own point of view. Whom does he put before us as the ideal of a shrewd and brave

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prince? Cæsar Borgia. But can we regard this monster as, even in Machiavelli's sense, a model statesman? Did any of his work last? His State fell to pieces as soon as he died. [Cæsar's State fell to pieces many years before he died; the moment his father, Alexander VI., left the Papal throne, Cæsar's dominion toppled over like a house of cards. This fact does not greatly confirm Treitschke's theory of power.] After ruining vast numbers of other people he was himself ruined. A power that trampled on all rights must necessarily come to grief, because in the moral world there is no support in anything that cannot resist.

"In consequence of its frightfully candid and harsh expression of Machiavelli's views, his book, *The Prince*, is for most men a repulsive thing; but it has had an enormous influence down to our own time. . . . This

‘Reason of State’—a policy which asks only if a thing is advantageous to the State—was followed toward the end of the seventeenth century with an unscrupulousness which it is now difficult for us to imagine. From that time dates the evil reputation which the word ‘politician’ so long retained in the mind of the people. Machiavelli’s book was called *The Devil’s Catechism*, or *The Ten Commandments Reversed*. His name became a thing of contempt, and a vast number of books, each improving on the morality of its predecessor, were written against him. It is an unfortunate fact that public opinion is always more moral than men’s own actions. The average man is ashamed to acknowledge openly a thousand things which he does in practice. What he can himself do in the way of Cossack-morality is incredible.

“The whole anti-Machiavellian literature

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is, with one brilliant exception, absolutely worthless. Who were the chief writers to assail the great Florentine? The Jesuits; and one can be fairly confident that any man who is attacked by the Jesuits, is a great and noble-minded man. The chief ground of their hatred is Machiavelli's large Italian patriotism, and the candour with which he preached what the Jesuits practised daily. Their whole polemic against Machiavelli is insincere, and is morally and scientifically worthless. Yet the great Florentine was, in the eighteenth century, which had so great a regard theoretically for the brotherhood of man, decried by all who smoked the pipe of peace, and traded in humanitarianism" (I., 89-93).

It is unfortunate that Treitschke does not specify the points which he finds repulsive in Machiavelli. One asks, for instance, whether Treitschke would approve the lying and decep-

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tion which Machiavelli favoured in diplomacy and politics. After a time Treitschke comes to deal expressly with this question. One would hardly expect him to say in so many words that lying was permissible in modern diplomacy, but a short passage will sufficiently indicate that he really approved it. He says:

“ Journalistic makers of phrases speak of statesmen as a corrupt class, as if lying were inseparable from diplomacy. The truth is precisely the opposite. Really great statesmen have always been distinguished for candour. . . . Think of the massive candour of Bismarck in important matters, in spite of his cunning in small details! It was his most powerful weapon, for smaller diplomatists always believed the opposite when he told them what he really wanted. In which of the professions do we find most lying? Clearly in the commercial world; that has always

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been the case. In trade lying has been systematised. In comparison with it, diplomacy shines with the innocence of a dove. Yet notice the immeasurable difference between the two: when an unscrupulous speculator lies on 'Change, he is merely thinking of his own purse, but the diplomatist is thinking of his country when, in a political transaction, he indulges in some obscuring of the facts. As historians, whose business it is to survey the whole life of man, we must admit that the profession of the diplomatists is far more moral than that of the merchant. The moral danger to which a diplomatist is exposed is not lying; it is the intellectual dissipation of the drawing-room" (I., 96).

In spite of the diplomatic language of these passages, it is plain that Treitschke approves of what he calls "the obscuring of facts," whenever the interest of his Divine State

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requires it. We may particularly notice his statement that what shocks us in Machiavelli is, not his indifference to the means used, but to the end for which the power of a State ought to be used. This means clearly that such a State as Prussia, which has such highly moral aims, need not be too scrupulous about the means which it employs to strengthen and extend its power.

But he presently approaches the question directly, and we have as plain a statement of the Machiavellian principle as one could desire. He raises the question of the relation of politics to moral law. Politics, he says gravely, is most assuredly subject to moral law, and there can be no collision whatever between the two. "Most of the supposed conflicts of politics and moral law are, if you examine them carefully, conflicts between politics and positive law. But positive

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law is of human origin and may be unreasonable. . . . When the social needs change, the law may become absurd, and so there are collisions. Hence politics is often obliged to act in violation of positive law, and a serious conflict may arise. In other cases there may be a collision of different duties." He is plainly arguing for a moral law which will prove sufficiently elastic to accommodate itself to the needs of the politician. He goes on to refer to the moral code of the Christian religion, which a greater German, Humboldt, described as equally binding upon a State and upon the individual. Treitschke says: "The chief precept of Christianity is that of love and of the freedom of the moral nature. It has no moral code and in that consists the very essence of its morality. Luther did a thing of immortal merit when he restored the doctrine that good works are of no avail without a good

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spirit. Neither can Kant's *Categorical Imperative* replace the doctrine of Christianity: it fails to lay stress on personal freedom." It follows that the man or the State is the moral judge of his or its own conduct, and must interpret the moral law in this sense of freedom. Then Treitschke goes into closer details about his subject:

"Now if we apply this standard of a deeper and genuinely Christian morality to the State, and if we remember that the essence of this social personality is Power, we see that the highest moral duty of the State is to maintain its power. The individual must sacrifice himself for the good of the community of which he is a member; but the State is the supreme thing in the external community of men, and therefore it cannot in any circumstances have a duty of self-destruction. The Christian duty to sacrifice oneself for something higher

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does not apply to the State, because there is nothing in the world superior to it ; hence it cannot sacrifice itself for something higher. If a State finds itself in danger of destruction, we praise it if it dies sword in hand. Self-sacrifice for another people is not only not moral : it contradicts the idea of self-assertion which is to the State the supreme thing.

“ Hence also we must distinguish between public and private morals. The scale of duties must be quite different for the State, since it is Power, than for the individual. Quite a number of duties which are incumbent on the individual do not exist for the State. Its highest duty always is to assert itself ; for the State that is absolutely moral. Hence we must recognise that the worst and most contemptible of all political sins is weakness : it is in politics the sin against the Holy Ghost. In private life there are pardonable weaknesses

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of sentiment. There can be no question of such a thing on the part of the State: it is Power, and if it belies its own nature, it cannot be too severely condemned. Take, for instance, the reign of Frederick William IV. Generosity and gratitude are, as we saw, political virtues also, but only when they do not interfere with the State's main purpose—the maintenance of its power. Now in the year 1849 the thrones of all the smaller German princes were in danger. Frederick William IV. took a step which in itself was admirable; he sent Prussian troops into Saxony and Bavaria, and restored order. But what followed was a mortal sin. Were the Prussians there to shed their blood for the Kings of Saxony or Bavaria? Certainly there ought to have been some permanent gain to Prussia. It had the small States in its hand; it needed only to keep its troops

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there until these princes entered the new German Empire. Yet the King withdrew his troops, and the small States, which they had liberated, smiled on their retreat. That was a piece of thoughtless weakness; the blood of the Prussian people was shed for nothing" (I., 99-101).

One might apply these "idealistic" sentiments to the relations of France and England and Belgium at the present moment. The ordinary moralist or historian would describe those relations as chivalrous. Chivalry, it seems, means something entirely different in Germany. Treitschke would describe the sentiment which has united France and England as materialism. They have sinned against one of the exalted laws of his State in venturing to shed the blood of their soldiers without any confident prospect of territorial gain. Lest, however, the vagueness of his language should

leave us in any doubt about the reality of his sentiments, he goes on to apply his principles expressly to one of those moral issues which are of actual interest. We all remember the German Chancellor's famous phrase, "A mere scrap of paper." How far did this, which seems to us a repulsive and mediæval sentiment, derive any inspiration from the supreme moralist of the Prussian State? Fortunately, in the course of this chapter, Treitschke has to face candidly the question of the State's obligation to observe the Treaties that it has signed, and in solving the question he is brutally candid. He starts from the principle that the State is Power: a principle from which he can at once justify the most unjust despotism within, and the most unjust aggression without. He says:

"It follows further from the fact that the essence of the State is Power, that it cannot

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recognise any arbitrating judge above itself [The Hague Tribunal], and that its legal obligation must in the last resort be determined by itself. We must bear this in mind, and not be such Philistines as to judge things, during great crises, from a lawyer's point of view. When Prussia broke the Treaty of Tilsit, it did wrong from the point of view of civil law. But who will be brazen enough to say that to-day? Even the French no longer say it. This applies also to international treaties which are not quite so immoral as that between Prussia and France was. Every State retains its right to decide its treaty-obligations, and the historian cannot use any rigid standard in this respect. He must ask himself the deeper question, whether the absolute duty of self-preservation does not justify the State?

“So it was in Italy in 1859. On the face

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of it Piedmont was the aggressor ; and Austria and its servile admirers in Germany did not forget to complain of the disturbance of their eternal peace. In reality Italy had been in a state of siege for years. No high-minded nation can tolerate such a state of things, and it was really Austria that attacked, because for years it had deeply injured Italy " (I., 102).

It is hardly necessary to point out the vital relation of these principles to the present situation. Very frequently in Treitschke we find the principle introduced that a nation is in a state of latent warfare when it is, in its own opinion, unjustly treated by another nation, or heavily pressed by the commercial rivalry of another nation. And since, according to his further principles, a State can in time of war annul all its treaties, this condition of latent warfare will equally justify it in ignoring a treaty-obligation. The way from

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these principles to the cynical violation of the treaty which guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium is perfectly clear.

But Treitschke goes even beyond this flagrant principle. Since the State is Power, and there can be no higher power in this world to direct its action, and since Christianity has no moral code to limit its own decisions, it follows that it can withdraw its assent to a treaty at any moment when its influence requires the violation of the treaty. In this respect there is a remarkable passage in the first chapter of his *Politik* :

“ The idea of Sovereignty must not be rigid : it must be elastic and relative, like all political conceptions. Every State will, in its own interest, restrict its Sovereignty in some respects by treaties. When a State concludes treaties with another State, its completeness as a Power is more or less curtailed. But that does

not alter the rule; for every treaty is a voluntary restriction of a State's own power, and all treaties under international law embody the clause: *rebus sic stantibus*. A State cannot bind its will for the future in relation to another State. The State has no higher judge above it, and will therefore conclude all treaties with that mental reservation. This is confirmed by the fact that, wherever there is an international law, all treaties between two States which go to war cease the moment war is declared; yet every State, being sovereign, has assuredly the right to declare war when it wills, hence every State is in a position to cancel the treaties which it has concluded. The progress of history is based on this constant alteration of treaties; and each State must take care that its treaties are alive, and not antiquated, so that another Power may not undo them by a declaration of

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war. Treaties which have outlived their uses must be denounced and replaced by new treaties corresponding to the new conditions. Hence it is clear that treaties under international law which restrict the will of a State are not absolute restrictions, but limits voluntarily imposed upon itself" (I., 37).

Here we have the complete "scrap-of-paper" theory, clothed in the most dignified academic language. It may seem singular that the diplomatists of Europe have not earlier taken into account, the fact, that this immoral principle was being taught, with a kind of official authority, from the political chair of Berlin. In point of fact, the diplomatists of Europe were perfectly aware that this doctrine was current in Prussia, and were fully prepared for the violation of the neutrality of Belgium. This does not alter the thoroughly corrupt nature of the principles

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laid down by Treitschke, and, after the present war, it will have to be seen whether the international conduct of Europe cannot be cleansed from these devices, taken from the lowest and most contemptible branches of commerce.

Treitschke, who has a great scorn for the supposed Jesuit principle that the end justifies the means—a principle, I may remark, which no Jesuit ever did formulate—is really always acting upon that principle. After laying down some of these astonishing rules about the violation of treaties, he insists that they are entirely justified if the State has “moral aims.” He takes the case of Napoleon I., who, one would think, was an admirable instance of the carrying-out of his principles. On the contrary, he totally disapproves of the imperialist campaign of Napoleon I., not on the grounds on which most historians to-day condemn Napoleon—that is to say,

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not on the ground that it is monstrous to immolate the lives of millions of men on the altar of one man's ambition—but on the ground that “France was unable to assimilate what it had conquered.” Here we have at once an ingenious way of condemning Napoleon and thoroughly justifying the imperialist dream of Germany. When Treitschke goes on to say that Napoleon is also to be condemned because he turned the rich diversity of peoples in Europe into “the dreary monotony of a world Empire,” he seems to forget that this is precisely the aim of his Pan-German politics. In the other chapters of his book where he sketches the internal ideal of a State, we shall see that dreary monotony, to be rigidly enforced, is its first characteristic. However, in the end he has recourse to the remarkable principle that “morality must be political, if politics

is to be moral: that is to say, moralists must recognise that a moral judgment on the State must be based on the nature and aims of the State, not on the nature and aims of the individual" (I., 105). He makes his meaning still more clear by directly approaching the supposed Jesuit maxim. After what he has already said, we read with astonishment the following words: "Up to this point there will hardly be any serious difference of opinion among thoughtful people." He continues:

"We now come to a series of very different questions, when we ask how far it is permissible in politics to use means which are reprehensible in civil life to attain ends which are in themselves moral. The famous Jesuit maxim is crude and radical in its outspokenness, but no one can deny that it contains a certain truth. There are countless instances, both in political and private life, where it is

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impossible to use entirely proper means. If it is possible, of course, to realise a moral aim by moral means, they are to be preferred, even if they are slower and less convenient.

“ We have already seen that the power of truth and candour in politics is much greater than is generally supposed. . . . On the whole, however, it is clear that political matters must be adapted to the sentiments and ideas of peoples at a lower grade of culture, when we have to deal with them. An historian who would judge European politics in Africa or the East on the same principles as in Europe would be a fool. The nation is lost which cannot terrify such peoples. We cannot blame the English for tying the Hindoos to cannon during the Mutiny and scattering their ‘bodies on the winds, since death was instantaneous.’ It is clear that in such a case it is necessary to terrify; and if we assume that, as the

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English assert, the English government in India is moral and necessary, we cannot refuse to employ these means.

“ We must apply a standard varying with the place as well as with the age. If we further admit that great States are very often in a condition of concealed warfare [in commerce] for decades, it is quite clear that many diplomatic deceptions are justified by this condition of latent war. Take, for instance, the negotiations between Bismarck and Benedetti. Bismarck had, perhaps, still some hope of avoiding a great war. Then Benedetti came with his preposterous demand. Was not Bismarck fully justified in deluding him with a sort of assent, and inducing him to think that Germany would agree? It is the same, in the same circumstances of latent warfare, with the use of bribery against other States. It is ridiculous to pose as moralists

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in this matter, and tell a State in such circumstances to read its catechism. Before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, Frederick the Great suspected that a storm was about to break on his little State. He therefore bribed two Saxon-Polish secretaries at Dresden and Warsaw. . . . There is no State in the world which, at such a time, would not have recourse to bribery and spying" (I., 105-107).

Once again we are reading the texts of the gospel on which the brutal campaign of the year 1914 is based. Treitschke at last finds something in English history of which he can approve. He goes back a hundred years, to a time when modern humanitarianism was unknown, and when the circumstances were such that no other European nation is ever likely to find itself in them. On this highly exceptional and ancient precedent he lays

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down the general principle that the soldiers of an invading army must terrify the population. That is as we know the principle embodied in the German military manuals and carried out with such appalling results in the invasion of Belgium and France. Hardly a single outrage has been done under official direction, or is recommended in the pages of Treitschke's pupil, Bernhardi, which does not find a justification in such passages as these.

Indeed the broader principle that you must use moral means if they are possible, but otherwise choose any which will serve your purpose, will cover the whole of the worst proceedings which we have already witnessed. They cover also that repulsive network of spies which Germany spread over the world, deeply corrupting the character of individuals and making permanently bitter the relations

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of foreigners to each other. They justify, if indeed they do not command, the network of mendacity which was spread over the world once the war was declared. They approve the enlisting of savage tribes in the German service in South Africa. I may remark in passing that Treitschke fully approved the use of coloured troops by European nations. He refers expressly to the use of the Turcos by the French in 1870, and says that the French had a perfect right to employ them. He is, of course, thinking of the coming days when Germany will have her colonies beyond the seas, and will be able to draw from them contingents of coloured troops, for the further expansion of her territory. But we need not draw out in detail all the consequences of these principles; they cover the brutal action of the Germans from Belgium to Constantinople and Cairo, from their intrigues in America

to their intrigues in our South African Colony.

All this is, of course, only a preparation for that future expansion of Germany which Treitschke regards as a sacred duty. We have already seen on different pages how he advocates this expansion. We have seen that he quite plainly directs the ambition of Germany toward the occupation of Belgium and Holland, if not of Denmark. Germany must possess the whole course of her rivers and a coast line in proportion to her size and population: this is for him a sacred and a moral duty. It is equally incumbent on Germany to obtain colonies. He speaks of the moral duty of sharing what has been called, with some hypocrisy, "the white man's burden": Germany is compelled by her civilisation to join with the other peoples in raising the lower races to a higher level. We

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need not examine how much sincerity there is in this plea, because Treitschke makes it quite clear that he has far different grounds for demanding colonies. A few passages taken here and there in his works give perhaps a more sincere idea of his colonial ambitions:

“The command of the sea is particularly useful in this respect. ‘The freedom of the sea makes the mind free,’ as the ancient Greeks truly said. The time may come when States which are without oversea possessions will no longer count as great States” (43-48).

“It may be said that no State can be largely and permanently developed without an approach to the sea. Every great State which aspires to stand on its own feet must have a coast line. Then it is really free. This is so true that we can explain whole periods of history on this ground alone. The key to the contrast which we find in the

history of Germany and Poland lies in this truth. The German colonisation of the coast went so far eastward, while the territory inland remained Slav, that a deadly enmity arose which no one could prevent. Poland was bound to aspire to win the mouths of her rivers, and this the Germans could not allow. Thus, there arose a territorial conflict which could not be remedied. Every young and aspiring people presses pitilessly towards the coast" (p. 215).

"The conquest of lands beyond the Atlantic is now the first aim of European fleets. For, as the aim of human civilisation is the aristocracy of the white race over the whole globe, the importance of any nation will in the end be determined by the share it has in the domination of the transatlantic world. Hence the Fleet becomes more and more important in our time" (II., 412).

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“ A nation that seeks to acquire new territory to exploit, in order to feed its growing population, shows the measure of its trust in God. It is scandalous to see the frivolity with which these grave matters are discussed to-day. People sing the old song in a new form : ‘ My Fatherland must become smaller.’ That is sheer perversity. We must and will have our share in the control of the globe by the white race. In this we have a great deal to learn from England. A Press that dismisses these grave matters with a few jokes shows that it has no appreciation of the sacredness of the aims of our civilisation. It is a healthy and normal thing for a civilised people to forestall by colonisation on a large scale the dangers of over-population. . . . The material and moral advantages of this aggrandisement of the nation cannot be exaggerated ” (I., 233 and 234).

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“ All the great peoples of history have felt, when they became strong, the impulse to impress their civilisation on barbaric lands. To-day we see the various peoples of Europe roaming over the whole world, trying to create an aristocracy of the white race. The nation that does not take its part in this enterprise will play a lamentable rôle later on. It is, therefore, a question of life and death for a great nation to seek Colonial expansion. . . . We [Germans] see now what we have lost. One of the appalling consequences of the last half-century is that England has appropriated the globe. The Continent, being in a state of constant trouble, had no time to look over the seas, and England took everything. The Germans had to look on helplessly ; they had enough to do in fighting their neighbours and in their internal troubles. Beyond question a great Colonial development is an advantage

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to a nation. Those amongst us who oppose the acquisition of Colonies are short-sighted. The whole question of Germany depends on how many million men will speak German in the future.

“It is nonsense to say that emigration to America is any advantage to Germany. What has Germany gained by the fact that thousands of her best sons, who could not support themselves at home, have turned their backs upon her? They are lost to her for ever. Although the emigrant himself is perhaps still linked with his native land by certain natural bonds, his children, and certainly his grand-children, are no longer Germans; the German only too easily learns to deny his country. They are assuredly not in a position to keep up their nationality in America. Just as the Huguenots, when they migrated to the Mark of Brandenburg, were, on the average, more highly

cultivated than the Brandenburgers, yet most of them lost their nationality, so we find with the Germans in America. Nearly a third of the population of North America is of German extraction. How much valuable strength have we not lost, and are losing daily, without the least compensation ! We have lost both the labour and the capital of the emigrants. What an enormous advantage they would have brought us if they had become colonists !

“ The kind of colonisation which maintains the nationality of the country of origin is a matter of immense importance for the future of the world. On it depends the extent to which each people will take its share in the domination of the world by the white race. It is quite conceivable that a country without colonies will cease to be one of the great Powers of Europe, however powerful it once

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was. Hence we must not lapse into that state of stagnation which comes of a purely continental policy, *and the issue of our next successful war must be the acquisition of a colony.*

“ Who first awakened the Scandinavians and the Russians to civilisation? Copenhagen was German : so was Novgorod. . . . The greatest colonisations the world has ever seen since the time of the Romans were brought about by Germans. We have realised every conceivable form of colonisation. . . . The civilising a barbaric people is the best. They have to choose between merging in the superior nation or being annihilated. That is the way the Germans acted in regard to the Prussians : they were either destroyed or turned into Germans. And, however cruel this process of development must be, it is a blessing for humanity. It is a sound thing that happens

in these cases. The nobler people conquers and assimilates the less noble. It is the normal procedure for the political conqueror to impose his own civilisation and ways upon the conquered " (I., 123-127).

On the very next page Treitschke shows that this advantage of incorporation in a nobler Empire applies just as well to the small States of Europe as to the barbaric lands beyond the seas. He now says openly: " In the West a number of outposts of the old German Empire have developed into independent States. It is possible, and is greatly to be desired, that Holland should some day return to the Fatherland " (128).

These passages give the whole gospel of Pan-Germanism. Germany is to overspread the little States which are her neighbours to the west; Germany is to cripple the power of England, which stands in the way of her

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colonial ambitions. We have, further, the full justification of the methods which we have seen actually employed in our own time to realise this Pan-German ideal. It will now be fully realised how deeply the teaching of this fanatical historian has tainted the blood of Germany. When, moreover, it passes into the characters of men with less strict personal principles than Treitschke himself, we realise that it can easily become an instrument of entirely brutal conduct. There can be no question but that Treitschke has been the chief and most profound influence in the formation of the German mind of to-day.

CHAPTER VI

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

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THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

ALTHOUGH it is not essential for the purpose of this work, it will nevertheless be of some interest, to consider the nature of this *Kultur* which Germany has to impose upon the world. We have seen repeatedly that her expansion is merely to be justified by this task; it becomes a sacred mission, a kind of Crusade, for the sake of which Germans must make such sacrifices as men made at the call of Peter the Hermit. I have already explained that *Kultur* does not mean culture. Even within his own department of culture Treitschke had something like a contempt for knowledge as such. He was a most in-

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dustrious historian, a writer of considerable ability, yet every part of his work has a strictly practical aim; the higher or mental culture, as a German would call it, would not seem to either Treitschke or Bernhardi, or any one of their pupils, worth the wasting of a single army corps. Treitschke, at least, has a definite structure of society in view when he talks of the elevated *Kultur* of Germany. It is that ideal of a State which the two volumes of his *Politik* describe so minutely and, one must add, so repulsively. We have already had many glimpses of this social ideal, but it will now be an advantage to sum up the scattered references, and let the English reader see what would be the result for every Germanised land, if Austria and Germany won in the present war. It is quite true that what Treitschke holds out as a sacred banner for the really devout followers of his gospel is

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merely a hypocritical pretence for many of his soldier followers, and is little more than a shibboleth for the vast majority of the German people, but it is none the less interesting to examine it.

Treitschke's ideal of a State is an antiquated, mediæval, and intolerable scheme which the majority of educated Germans would not tolerate for a moment. They repeat the language which they have learned from him, only because it gives some consecration, in the name of learning and of morals, to their imperialist ambitions. The nineteenth century is an age of transition. From earlier days we have received the doctrine of the divine right of Kings. Whatever views we may hold, in the various states of Europe to-day, on the subject of monarchy, the old legend of the divine right of Kings is entirely discredited. Yet Treitschke had to build

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essentially upon this legend. On no other foundation could he raise the extraordinary power which he wished to put into the hand of the head of the State. The Hohenzollern possessed this power by a mystic divine right, and therefore there was no need for Treitschke to seek to justify it. All constitutional monarchies were, as we saw, derided by him because they had not his principle of legitimacy in their royal houses. This saved him from the confusion which might ensue if there were a dozen royal houses, each claiming a divine right and a divine mission. But in his eyes France was a decrepit republic, Russia too barbarous to be taken into account, and England had forfeited her real title of monarchy. The Emperor of Germany alone, therefore, had a just title to supreme power, within and without, and, when we find in recent years that monarch

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speaking of the use of the mailed fist, he is only repeating, in more popular language, Treitschke's theory of monarchy. We have seen how this despotic power will work out as regards other States. It is curbed not even by moral law or religious codes. Internally, or in its relation to its own people, this power would exert the most intolerable oppression.

Against this antiquated view modern Germany was protesting with increasing disdain, and in his later years Treitschke was as sour and pessimistic as he describes Bismarck to have been. The view was spreading in Germany—the common-sense view of the vast majority of people in every civilised State to-day—that the institutions of the State exist for the welfare of the people, and it is only so long as the military system exists that the State will have this painful and exacting duty to form them into armies for the defence

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of their land and property. The essential thing in the life of a State is to promote the progress and happiness of the individual citizens to the utmost of its power ; to educate the ignorant, to mitigate the burden of poverty, to organise or at least direct the industrial world, to care for the weak and powerless, to administer justice and to lay as little restriction on its people as these purposes will allow. To Treitschke this was "materialism." He says :

"The modern individualistic conception, which adorns itself with so many names, is leagues removed from the ancient idea of the State's duty. It starts from the principle that the State must, internally and externally, protect life and property, and the State in this restricted sense is called emphatically the Legal State. This theory is the legitimate offspring of the old idea of natural right.

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According to it, the State may be only a means for the life-aims of the individuals who compose it; we have already seen that this is a contradiction in terms. The more idealistic the terms in which you conceive human life, the more you are forced to conclude that the State's best policy is to confine itself to external protection alone. . . . The State is a moral community; it is summoned to positive work for the education of the race; and its final aim is to compel the people, in and through it, to form a definite character. That is the highest moral duty of a people, as well as of an individual" (I., 79).

This theory imposes the State upon the citizens without any consultation of their will. It lends itself to the most arbitrary laws at the will of an absolute monarch. Treitschke, as we saw, very grudgingly allows a certain measure of popular representation, but he has

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not the slightest sympathy with it. He left the Reichstag in disdain, and he constantly holds that the guidance of a God-inspired monarch is far better than the deliberations of a Parliament. Of popular consent, either to the laws or the forms of a State, he will not hear for a moment. He says:

“The State is the public power of defence and offence. It is in the first degree Power, in order to assert itself: it is not the totality of the people, as Hegel supposes in his glorification of a State. The people does not wholly constitute it, but the State protects and embraces the life of the people, externally directing it on all sides. It does not ask about their good-will: it demands obedience. Its laws must be observed, willingly or unwillingly. It is an advantage when the placid obedience of the citizens is accompanied by an internal rational assent: but this

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assent is not absolutely necessary. Empires have lasted for centuries, as powerful and highly developed States, without any such internal allegiance on the part of their citizens.

"What the State chiefly wants is external compliance. It insists that it be obeyed: its nature is to realise what it wills. . . . Power is the principle of the State, Faith the principle of the Church, Love the principle of the Home. The State says: 'It makes no difference to me what you think—you have got to obey.' That is why sensitive natures find it so difficult to understand the life of the State. It may be said of women as a whole that they normally attain an understanding of State and Right only through their husbands: just as a normal man has no feeling for the small details of economy. That is easily understood, for the idea of Power is

assuredly hard, yet the highest and first thing is thoroughly to submit to it. . . .

“The State is not an Academy of Art: when it abdicates its power in favour of the ideal aspirations of humanity it belies its own nature and perishes. The belying of its own power is for the State the real sin against the Holy Ghost; to attach oneself to a foreign State on sentimental grounds, as we Germans have so often done in regard to England, is really a mortal sin. Hence it is that the power of ideas has only a limited significance in the State. Certainly it is very great, but ideas alone do not advance political powers” (I., 32-34).

At times Treitschke descends from these mystic heights, and offers what he would call materialist arguments for his position. He tries to prove on utilitarian grounds that the monarchy is the ideal institution. Parlia-

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ments, he says, "are always less scrupulous than monarchs," but as a rule he wishes to pledge his whole case on the divine right of the monarch. Dealing with various forms of constitution in his second volume, he says :

"It is a secondary consideration that the will of the State is vested in a single personality: the more important point is that this power has not been *bestowed on* the King, but rests on its own rights. It has its power from itself, and that is the chief reason why a monarch is better able to dispense social justice, and does better dispense it, than any republic. Republicans find it more difficult to be just because of their system of party-government. In history the monarchies have always been more distinguished for justice than republics" (II., 53).

Even many who share Treitschke's conclusion must have carefully avoided his

argument. The idea that justice is better administered in the Kingdom of Prussia than in the modern United States, or that it was better administered in ancient Athens than in the ancient Roman Empire, is too preposterous to be considered. Not much better are Treitschke's other arguments for his absolute monarchy by divine right. He says again :

“ Owing to his exalted position the monarch can see further than ordinary men. The ordinary man surveys only a small area of life, especially when we consider the involuntary class-prejudices which surround him. There are prejudices of the middle-class and the scholar, as well as prejudices of the nobility. They see only a small section, not the whole of society. Whereas it is clear that a monarch must know more than any of his subjects about the whole life of the nation :

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that he is in a position to appreciate the resources of society more accurately than the average man can. This is especially true in regard to foreign affairs. The King can judge much better than any of his subjects, or even than a Republican party-government, the real facts about the whole situation abroad" (II., 55).

We must take such passages in connection with the constant glorification of the Hohenzollerns in his historical writings. We certainly cannot suppose that this part of Treitschke's doctrine has been taken very seriously in educated Berlin; and the other States composing the German Empire must have deeply resented many of Treitschke's remarks. He tells us that on one occasion Bismarck wished to restrain the Emperor William I. from taking a certain step, and told him that the representatives of the Empire would not agree

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to it. William I. angrily retorted to Bismarck, "the Empire is merely an enlargement of Prussia." Treitschke's only comment on this is that it was "the brusque expression of a soldier, but true." He glorifies Bismarck and all the servants of the Prussian State in the same proportion. "The essential thing in a great statesman," he says, "is strength of will, massive ambition, and a passionate joy in success." The men whom Goethe called "the Apes and Pugs and Parrots of Frederick the Great" stand out in his pages as heroic figures in the history of Prussia. There can be little doubt that only a very restricted group among the educated people of Germany can have taken his doctrine of autocracy seriously.

Treitschke groups together all the advancing movements of Europe, which are, of course, ably represented in Germany,

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under the general heading of Liberalism or Radicalism. Against this theory of the State he waged an implacable war. We must, however, understand that what Treitschke calls Liberalism does not coincide with the political party of any country which goes by that name. It is really the whole humanitarian spirit, as applied to the work of a State. Yet this is how Treitschke meets the feeling which is now accepted by both political parties in this and every other enlightened country : " There is a natural difference between the social and the political conception of the State. We may regard the State from above—from the point of view of the government—and ask : ' What secures its power ? ' The question of the material condition of its subjects is secondary from this political point of view of the State. The social view, on the other hand, approaches the State

with a naïve selfishness, and stridently calls attention to the fact that new social forces, which the legislation of the State has not yet regarded, have made their appearance. What we call in our days Liberalism approaches this social point of view. If that were the only way of regarding the State—if it were not opposed by a hard political conception of the State's duty—our national order would be broken up, and Germany would fall into countless hostile social groups. . . . A nation that lives only for the satisfaction of its social desires, which wishes only to become richer and live more comfortably, yields entirely to the lower impulses of nature. What a glorious people the Dutch were when they fought against the power of Spain! But they had hardly secured their independence when the curse of peace began to make itself felt. Adversity steels the hearts of

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noble nations: in prosperity they run the risk of being enervated. The once brave Dutch nation have become creditors of their State, and have, even from the physical point of view, degenerated. That is the curse of a people that looks only for social life and loses the sentiment of political greatness" (p. 58 and 59).

One wonders how Treitschke would confront the social problems which the modern State is beginning to regard seriously in every country. He assures us that there have always been masses, and that there always will be masses. This repetition of Carlyle's doctrine of fifty years ago may, or may not, commend itself to any reader, but assuredly none will accept Treitschke's justification of the squalid poverty which lies at the base of the social pyramid to-day. More than one writer has said, like him, that the millions

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must labour in order that the few may paint pictures and write books. A very natural point of view for the man who writes books or paints pictures, but a broader feeling is making its way into modern legislation and social effort. Against all these aspirations to do something for the poorer mass of the people Treitschke sets his face. Like war, the existence of a very large class of poor workers is an eternal part of the scheme of nature, or of Providence. A nation, he says, "is rejuvenated from below." When he perceives that the masses to-day are not entirely reconciled to this scheme, he prescribes the way in which his Kultur-State is to deal with them. He says: "It is important to remember that heroes of war and religion are the most popular with the masses : when we realise that, we know how to treat the discontented masses. The next thing

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is the satisfaction of their economic needs, and in this respect we must work upon their depressed spirits with all the power of the promise which religion alone affords. This virile spirit and religious feeling, which are so strong among the masses, must be encouraged to the fullest extent. Hence national armies are a real blessing: and religion is not so necessary to any as to the common man." Once more he borrows a page from Napoleon's maxims. Treitschke, who in his earlier years had had grave trouble with his father for abandoning the Protestant religion, becomes extremely zealous in support of the clergy. They are to be, according to Napoleon's idea, the spiritual *gensdarmes*, using their authority on behalf of the autocrat. For all the terrible burdens which the State imposes on them the clergy are to assure them that they will be richly rewarded in the next world.

We can hardly wonder that the democracy of Berlin, which is so far Social Democrat that the other political parties could only return one member to the Reichstag in the city of Berlin, smiled on Treitschke's doctrine and conducted a scornful controversy with him. Treitschke perceived that, if you are going to share the real culture of our time with the more intelligent men and women of the working class, the basis of his servile State is undermined. Here again, therefore, we find him approaching a problem of great interest in every civilised community; how, and to what extent, are we to give real education to the masses. In such "inferior" countries as England and the United States this problem is bravely met by university extension lectures and other admirable ways of lending a hand to the aspiring workers. Germany has as many social reformers as any

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other country, and the same means were being adopted in that country. To these measures Treitschke opposes the following somewhat threadbare argument :

" There is a ridiculous idea spreading among us to-day of helping the masses by giving them what is called education by means of public lectures. The ordinary man has neither the leisure nor the freedom of mind, as a rule, to assimilate the unsystematic and irregular instruction which is given to him in these lectures. Enterprises of this kind are a complete failure ; they produce only a half-education of the worst kind. Regular instruction in elementary mathematics and in the mother tongue would be much more useful than such lectures " (p. 318).

He sees that in the towns there is no hope whatever of placing his old-fashioned barriers against the enlightenment of the masses.

His next direction is, therefore, that the workers must be kept on the land as much as possible, and he candidly says that the great advantage of life in villages is that it does not pay the demagogue to appeal to a village-audience. He adds that life in the city is unnatural and unhealthy, but throughout the whole of these pages he shows that his concern is entirely political.

In the next section he deals with the State-system of education. Here, again, he quarrels entirely with the modern spirit. This scheme, which our professors of education and our teachers have framed on the basis of a hundred years of experience, he disdainfully compares to the splendid system of elementary education which was followed in his younger days. There is not, he says, sufficient attention to religious instruction; in which many would be disposed to agree

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with him until they perceive that his sole aim is to distract the workers from hopes of bettering their condition, and to infuse into them his remarkable doctrine of the divine mission imposed on Germany since the days of Luther. All this, he says, must be the essential part of the education of the children of the workers. Beyond that the only education of need is to make them useful workers and patriotic soldiers.

Whatever point of social reform we take up, we find Treitschke in the same grossly reactionary mood. Even in Germany only a very small and very old-fashioned minority would agree with him. No doubt on many points which seem extraordinary to us in other countries, such as the praise of the duel, which I have quoted in an earlier chapter, he would find many supporters. But in his attacks on the ballot-box and

similar elementary reforms of modern times he belongs almost to a departed generation. I will venture to quote one more passage in illustration of his attitude. The question of the death-sentence upon murderers is still a very open one in modern society, nor do I for a moment represent that in pleading for the retention of the death-sentence Treitschke is in any way singular. On the contrary, I agree with him. But the language in which he pleads for retaining it shows the whole spirit of the man. He says: "That those in authority shall bear the sword is a saying of the Bible which lies deep in the blood of every sensible man. Anyone who would remove this truth from the world, would sin against the simple moral sentiments of the people. The ultimate problems of social life are to be solved on practical, not theoretical, grounds. The conscience of every serious

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man demands that blood shall be wiped out by blood. The ordinary man must doubt the existence of justice on earth if this last and highest punishment be abandoned. Think of a murderer of the type of the Australian murderers, who have the lust of murder in their blood, being condemned to life-long imprisonment! He breaks out of prison, commits murder again, and returns to the same cell, as the State has no other way of punishing him. Does not such a State outrage the moral consciousness? It makes itself a laughing stock when it cannot do away with such a criminal" (II., 427).

Finally, I may notice the attitude which Treitschke takes up in regard to every dissenter from his ideals. His conflict with the Social Democrats was bitter and fiery. He hardly ever descends to argument with them, and, when he does, it is little better than

platITUDE. The women movement had hardly begun in Germany, on a large scale, in his time, but we know how he would have met it. Again he takes his counsel from Napoleon. The woman's place is not merely the home, but the nursery.

A third danger which he saw against his autocratic State was the permeation of the Jew throughout Europe. Here again he conducted a violent controversy, and he advocated measures of actual persecution against the members of the Jewish race. "I see," he says, "only one means that we can adopt to meet the danger: a real energy of our national pride, which must turn away from everything that is foreign to the German nature. That applies to everything and everybody: the theatre and the music-hall as well as the daily paper. Wherever the Jewish taint affects our life, the German must turn

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away and learn the habit of telling the truth about it. The moderate parties in our midst are responsible for the violent Anti-Semitism which is growing amongst us" (p. 298).

In this case Treitschke shows his usual want of historical insight: indeed here he shows far less than Luther himself, who had a shrewd perception of the way in which the treatment of the Jews by Christians was responsible for the features to which Christians objected. Treitschke repeats the usual reproach that the Jews excel only in one art, the stage (which is totally false), and only in one branch of commerce, finance. Here any candid historian might have enlightened his readers or pupils. During many centuries money-lending was the only profession in which the Jews of Europe were allowed to employ their activity, and thus the financial specialism of the Jew is by no means connected with

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features of his character, but is entirely understood from his history. With the Jews, the Roman Catholic and all other classes of dissenters fell under the lash of Professor von Treitschke. Despotism in the monarch, absolute and uniform docility in the subjects, are the features of the new religion and the new State.

This dreary and appalling Sparta was to be imposed upon the world by the triumphant march of the German armies. Not the culture of the scientific or artistic world, but this grim political scheme, is what Treitschke meant when he put the word "Kultur" on the sacred banners of the German Crusaders. History was to be a succession of peoples living under this ghastly rule, and every few years pouring out their blood in struggles with their neighbours for the assertion of their will and their power. This would reduce

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the globe from the comparative civilisation it has reached to-day to the level of the Mesozoic ocean, where mighty sharks and gigantic devil-fishes struggled with each other for survival. The human refinement on their warfare would be most clearly perceived in the astuteness of the spies and the mendacious representatives which one of these super-powers sent among its neighbours to prepare the way for a war. One wonders which is the greater blasphemy, to connect the word 'culture' or the words 'divine mission' with such a conception. But, as I said, we must not suppose for a moment that any large proportion of the German people accepted this ideal. "Kultur" became a mere parrot-cry, or a flimsy pretext to cover the crude imperialist ambition of certain classes of German merchants and the officers of the German army. Each had his own ideal of the system which

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would be imposed upon conquered countries, and it is one of the most lamentable features of this development of the German mind, that it started from a perfectly clear and hard ideal, yet, when it comes to action, ends in the great confusion of the German mind to-day. Treitschke's views on the functions of the State have been generally discarded, but Treitschke's sanction of the gospel of imperialism, and of the maxim that the end justifies the means, remain in full vigour.

CHAPTER VII

THE WORKING OF THE POISON

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THE reader may imagine, that so much of this system of the Berlin historian is fantastic and antiquated, that he cannot possibly have had a great influence in Germany. Yet one of the recent writers who is best informed on modern German, literature, Professor Cramb, asserts confidently that Treitschke had as much influence on the mind of Germany, as Macaulay and Carlyle together had on the mind of England. Although Professor Cramb is at times inaccurate—for instance, he is much too lenient to Treitschke, and confuses his early progressive views with the totally reactionary ideas of his later years—this seems

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to be a good estimate of the influence of Treitschke. One may distinguish three types of mind in the German people to-day. It is needless to remark that they are not sharply separated from each other, but pass in the most delicate shades from class to class. In the main, however, there are three typical attitudes. There is first the attitude of the man who wishes to gain by aggressive war: to gain politically, to gain in territory, or to gain in purse. With this type of mind I am not concerned. Such men have merely used the cloak of Treitschke's idealism to cover their sordid aspirations. The second type is the attitude of the vast mass of the German people. This type of mind, the mind of the uneducated masses, cannot be seriously considered. It is merely a blind adhesion to the views of the daily paper, the patriotic preacher, or the blatant politician. One must

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merely regard it as a tragedy, that the whole momentum of the German struggle is given by this mass of undiscerning and utterly deluded ignorance.

The type of mind that it is really interesting to study, and that it will be imperative for us to study when the hour of settlement comes, is the mind of the middle-class. There can be no doubt that the middle-class mind of Germany has been appallingly tainted with the doctrine which I have expounded in the preceding pages. The idea that the German nation has been driven on to the field of battle at the point of the bayonet is totally false. When war was declared they sprang with alacrity to carry out the dream of expansion, and of giving a death-blow to England, which had been fermenting in their minds for a whole generation. At last they were going to carry out the gospel of

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Treitschke ; to assert the greatness of Germany, and to paralyse the strength of its more successful rival.

Any man who doubts whether this sentiment was really widely spread among cultivated Germans is living under a delusion. For years I have been engaged in translating works from the German into English. I have been in contact with some of the leaders of German culture, and have always understood that we formed an international brotherhood which would, in time of crisis, endeavour to stem the war passions of less cultivated people. Travelling in Germany, I have found the most amiable and courteous treatment from members of the German middle-class, both men of science and men of commerce. Yet no man who is well acquainted with the German literature of the last thirty years can be ignorant that the ideal put forward so openly

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by Treitschke has lived and spread in works that have a commanding influence among educated Germans.

Since the war began, indeed, we have had remarkable proofs of the existence of this spirit in the most unexpected quarters. Men of every class, every religious sect, and of the various bodies opposed to the religious sects, have joined hands in supporting the action of their country. Professor Harnack, the leading representative of Protestant theology in Germany, uses precisely the same language as the leaders of Roman Catholicism: and it is a language of absolute approval of Germany's action. Professor Rudolph Eucken, the leader of the mystic religious school in Germany to-day, and Professor Ernest Haeckel, the leader of the German Rationalists, have issued a joint letter in which they defiantly defend even the violation of the

neutrality of Belgium. I have known Haeckel personally for many years, and have frequently heard him express the indebtedness of German science to English science, and the most sincere desire for cordial co-operation between the two countries. Most assuredly neither he nor any other German professor dreams of imposing their culture, in the sense in which many suppose in England to-day, upon any other country. "Co-operation for the advance of humanity" is the ideal which Haeckel has put into the German Press even since the declaration of war. Haeckel's principal colleague, Professor Wilhelm Ostwald, one of the most distinguished physicists in Germany, uses even stronger language. A leader of one of the largest humanitarian bodies in Germany (the *Monistenbund*), he nevertheless has committed himself recently to the following sentiment :

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“If we are defeated, the defeat will result in the supremacy of the lower instincts over the higher ones, of the brute over man, and of a reaction from morality which would be the forerunner of the ruin of European civilisation. It is on our shoulders that the future of civilisation in Europe rests.”

Dr. Erich Marks, Professor of History in Munich University, speaking recently to members of the Ethical Society at Munich—again a group belonging to one of the principal humanitarian movements in Germany, and one that has no ideal whatever of a divine inspiration of the Emperor—has used an even grosser language. He affirms that Germany is animated and ennobled by “the intensest forces of our civilisation”: that this is an hour in which “we are to prove whether or no we shall become a real world-nation in power, in economics, and in culture”; that

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Germany's aim is to beat her enemies to such an extent that she will be able to breathe freely: that "we must strive to shatter England's supremacy, on land and sea, which cramps and constrains us"; and that Germany, supreme on the Continent at the end of the war, "can then devote her energies, in combining power with culture, to the task of spreading the German Welt-Kulture."*

These passages, taken from writers of such very different schools, and particularly writers of the most progressive and humanitarian ideals, must convince everybody that the poison of Treitschkeism has made terrible ravages in the veins of the German nation. A half dozen younger historical writers like Sybel, Droysen, and others, as well as military writers like General von Bernhardi, have

* I take the two preceding quotations from the *Newcastle Daily Journal* of October 26th.

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carried on the work of Treitschke and disseminated it in every section of the German nation. It may be asked, however, how it is that the fierce opponents of Treitschke have come under this influence. Here we have another very powerful German writer to consider. Friedrich Nietzsche has been very frequently mentioned in connection with the present mood of the German people, though the influence of Nietzsche has not the slightest proportion to the broader influence of Treitschke. His significance really is that he inoculates with almost the same virus the classes which refuse to be inoculated by Treitschke. A brief consideration, therefore, of Nietzsche's ideas may be of some interest.

Treitschke, we saw, deduced from the history of nations that struggle is the law of human life: that the dream of eternal peace is a very grave danger to the progress of

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mankind. Nietzsche not only confirms this view, but says that hard and relentless conflict is not merely a law of the past few thousand years of human civilisation; it is a law plainly discerned in the millions of years during which living things have been on this globe. It is well known how recent science has established the theory which is popularly called Darwinism: the theory of a struggle for life and survival of the fittest. On this law Nietzsche founded his philosophy, and he came to use the same language in regard to the demand for peace as Treitschke himself had used. Further, Nietzsche's philosophy agrees with one of the fundamental ideas of Treitschke's system in the emphasis which it lays on will, power, and self-assertion. For Nietzsche also the supreme thing is will, and the supreme ideal is the attainment of power or the assertion of power. For both men

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weakness is the deadly sin. Students of the history of thought will know, that the long line of German philosophers from the days of Kant, had ended, in the middle of the nineteenth century, with Schopenhauer, who asserted that not intellect, but will, was the supreme reality of the universe. This purely academic theory, which is almost entirely discredited in philosophy to-day, has had a great influence on the development of this political school in Germany. We must remember, too, that such a theory harmonised very well with the natural sentiments of the German in the second half of the nineteenth century. From 1870 onward, Germany has been in the condition of a young man, robustly conscious of young strength and great ambitions. Both Treitschke and Nietzsche struck the note which was bound to have a vibrant response in the heart of the German people.

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There are, of course, profound differences between the views of Treitschke and of Nietzsche. The power which Treitschke had in view was the power of the State: Nietzsche preached the doctrine of the power of the individual, or, rather, of certain individuals in the community. Treitschke almost made an idol of the authority of the State; Nietzsche was almost totally indifferent to questions of State. His ideal was strongly individualistic: men who were conscious individually of power, were to cultivate their will and their strength, and assert it to their personal advantage. Further, Treitschke was eager to keep the masses thoroughly religious and obedient to the State authority; Nietzsche had the most bitter contempt of the Christian religion, and only a slightly less disdain of what he called "the Herd." There are many other differences between the two men.

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Treitschke held out to the individual the Stoic ideal of morality and self-sacrifice: Nietzsche despised the Stoic ideal, and scoffed at altruism and self-sacrifice in every shape. Treitschke glorified Germany and Prussia: Nietzsche had a great disdain of everything German, and not an atom of respect for the Prussian system.

Yet with all these differences the most daring rebel of modern German thought, united with the most reactionary conservative of modern Germany, in impressing upon the middle-class some of the sentiments which have broken out in the present war. Professor Cramb wrongly states that Treitschke was always bitterly opposed to Nietzsche. From the first he saw how far Nietzsche's views agreed with his own, and to the end of his life he had a kind of grudging sympathy with Nietzsche. Treitschke hated what is called

“ Young Germany,” and it was these young Germans, scoffing at almost everything which Treitschke held sacred, who came particularly under the influence of Nietzsche.

The common features which I have pointed out will show how the influence of the two powerful features coincided. Both glorified war in the same ultra-rhetorical language. Nietzsche's chief advice to the man who would follow his advice was: “ Live dangerously.” It was precisely the advice which Treitschke was giving to the model State. Even their difference in regard to Christianity will be found on careful examination to be not quite so deep as it seems. Nietzsche's scorn of Christianity was chiefly based upon the fact that, as he supposed, Christianity had brought the doctrine of mercy and unselfishness into the world. Although we have found Treitschke recommending the Christian religion as

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the Gospel of Love, we have seen enough to realise that this was a hollow phrase. There was no room for love, or tenderness, or sentiment in Treitschke's scheme. He has told us again and again that sentimental weakness, or what he is fond of calling the feminine nature, is merely a danger to a State. Where he differs from Nietzsche really, is that he denies that Christianity imposes any such sentiment. We remember his theory of the free Christian conscience, which has been introduced by Luther. This new type of conscience has, in the first case, to serve the purposes of the State, and in Treitschke's mind it takes the form of a hard and repellent ideal which is very closely similar to that of Nietzsche.

They agree further in regard to morality, much as they seem to differ at first sight. Treitschke spreads an unctuous moral language

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over the whole of his works: Nietzsche seems to be a fiery rebel against moral law on every page of his writings. Yet here again there has been a notable agreement. Nietzsche does not wish to abolish moral law, but, as he puts it in his works, "to transvalue moral values." That is precisely what we have found Treitschke doing time after time. If, he has told us, politics is to be moral, morality must become political; and we know by this time what political conduct means. In other words, both men rebelled against the characteristic sentiment of modern times, which some will call Christian and some call Humanitarian. There are other agreements between the two men, and some of these again are important. Treitschke, we saw, was bitterly opposed to Socialism and to democracy in any shape or form. Nietzsche was just as bitterly opposed to those

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tendencies of political thought. Again the followers of the two professors found themselves on common ground.

Other coincidences need not be explained at any great length. I may mention only, as illustrating this remarkable agreement of two men who were so utterly different in aims and characters, that they came to a similar conclusion in face of what we call the women-movement. Nietzsche crudely said: "If you are going to the women do not forget the whip." Treitschke was much too polite a person to use such language, but his ideal was substantially the same as that of Nietzsche. Men had a work to do in the world which women were utterly and eternally incapable of performing.

This very brief examination of Nietzsche's ideas will suffice to show how the large class of "Young Germany," which sneered at

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Treitschke, still came under the influence of the same ideas. Indeed, many of the new generation belonged to both schools in a somewhat muddle-headed way. General von Bernhardi is a remarkable example of that class, and the soldierly bluntness with which he applies the vague principles of Treitschke shows how the next generation was shaping the gospel to its own ends. From both sides war was being exalted, and the military strength was becoming its greatest consideration. The language of the philosophers was, as is usual, borrowed by the journalists, and the doctrine of will and power pervaded the whole literature of Germany.

As the time went on it became more and more apparent, that this vague aspiration to strike some person or some Power must ultimately be directed against England. People waited for "the hour," as they freely called

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it in military and other German circles, and any enlightened English journalist might have discovered any time in the last few years that this preparation was going on. If we had translated the works of Treitschke and his followers into English at an earlier date, no one would have believed that such fanatical sentiments were shared by any very large proportion of the German nation.

So the German mind went on fermenting in its design until the hour struck. England, the great and real adversary, seemed to be embarrassed by at least the chances of civil war in Ireland and in South Africa. The colonies seemed to be growing more and more independent, and might decline to take on their shoulders a part of the Mother's burden. Both in India and in Egypt a strong national party was arising which might be trusted to take advantage of any grievous disturb-

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ances in England. On the other hand, the great political power which the Bismarckians dreaded in Germany, that is to say, Social Democracy, was making appalling progress, and the nation must be diverted from this examination of schemes of social betterment, by the old cry of national unity against a national peril. In fine, new devices in artillery, in aircraft and in ships had been discovered by the naval and military authorities, and it was felt that the sixteen-inch howitzers could not very long be hidden in the cellars of the Essen works. This accumulation of circumstances clearly indicated the time for declaring war. How far German intrigue was responsible for the actual declaration, or for the failure of Austria and Russia to agree upon their quarrel—I need hardly say that for most of us there is no uncertainty about the matter—may be left to the impartial verdict

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of the future historian or of other nations of our time.

It must not be supposed, however, that the entire German nation has entered upon this war in the spirit of Treitschke, or even in the spirit of Nietzsche. We have had enough experience of the entire unscrupulousness of Prussian agents and Prussian officials to understand that the German people have been deliberately misinformed. When we find their leading theologians and professors of international law zealously defending the action of the Government, we must make careful allowance for a probable misrepresentation of the facts. Those of us who are well acquainted with their writings know that the vast majority of them hold, and hold sincerely, precisely the same humanitarian ideals as ourselves; and that the character of the cultivated man to-day, whether he be called German or English

or American, has the same standard of conduct. They are not men who approve of deliberate mendacity, and most assuredly not men who approve of brutal outrages on civilians.

They have, however, as we well know, been taught for years that England regards their national prosperity with jealous and malicious sentiments, and is eager to grasp the first opportunity to destroy the young German Empire. This belief has so saturated the Press and literature of Germany for years, that it must have made an impression on the minds of even the most judicious. We must remember always that, however much it may be to our credit, we have made no serious effort to counteract the campaign of misrepresentation which the agents of Prussia have conducted for many years. When the war is over, and the tariff-walls against truth are

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broken down, probably large numbers of these German scholars, at whom some of our writers scoff to-day, will join with us in condemning the action of the German troops.

We are to-day writing one of the most tragic pages in the history of mankind. A nation akin to us in blood, admirable at least in its courage and the success which has rewarded its courage, is nearing the climax of its career. Class for class, the German people correspond very closely to ourselves. I remember sitting a few years ago in a little inn near the old battlefield of Jena. With me was one of the most eminent scientific men of Germany, and, as we sat over a Thuringian steak and a glass of Thuringian ale, the simple country folk came in and out of the dining-room, greeting their distinguished fellow-citizen, and receiving from

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this Privy Counsellor of the German Empire the most sincere and brotherly greeting. Nothing could possibly be farther from the ideal of a nation which is suggested to us in the abominable pages of Heinrich von Treitschke. Yet this fine and prosperous people has been cursed by his mighty hallucination. Travelling amongst them, I have heard them complain that our commercial rivalry is bound to lead to disputes, and, in order that England may not dictate the verdict, they must have a Fleet equal to our own. Yet all the time their statesmen were hindering the setting up of the International Tribunal which would have given a just verdict on such quarrels without the shedding of a drop of blood. Dazed and deluded by the Treitschkean ideal, that war is a salutary discipline, and that they had a divine mission, they rushed blindly over the fields of Europe,

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and scattered pain and outrage over Belgium and France.

The issue of the war is certain. We have to compare the resources of the Allies on one side, and of Austria and Germany on the other. The resources of the Allies are immeasurably the greater. In order to balance this disadvantage the Germans will have to destroy their opponents far more rapidly than their own troops are destroyed. The precise opposite of this has been happening ever since the beginning of the war, and we have no grave reason to suppose that there will be any change. Already Germany and Austria have lost more than a million and a half of their sturdiest citizens, and Germany alone must have wasted at least £300,000,000. If the war lasts as long as some of our military experts predict, the great and aspiring Empire is obviously doomed. The ring of steel is

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already narrowing round its frontiers, and its more thoughtful citizens must see that nothing less than a miracle can save them from ultimate defeat. Yet it is certain that that ring of steel will draw inward and inward until it confines the heart of the German Empire.

We all trust that the age of vindictive punishment is over; but Europe owes it to its own finer sentiments that Germany shall be made powerless for ever to attempt to carry out its appalling ambition. It will lose at least five of its provinces, with a vast proportion of its population. It will lose some of its new colonies. It will lose, and never recover, a large proportion of the commerce which it has laboriously built up; and it will shoulder an indemnity-debt which will crush the last trace of its morbid ambition. Thus history will give a reply to its Berlin inter-

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preter ; and Germany will realise with amazement that, in spite of all its hollow or mistaken cries of moral duty and divine mission, a world armed with an outraged sentiment of justice, will brand for ever the colossal immorality of the man who seduced it.